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Volume 11

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Number 3

William Faulkner and the Social Conscience

DAYTON KOHLER¹

THE war was the conditioning experience William Faulkner had in common with other writers of his generation. He had served in the British Royal Air Force, been wounded in a plane crash, drifted from one odd job to another after his return from France; and he wrote his first novels in the familiar idiom of postwar disillusionment and discontent. The qualities which distinguished *Soldier's Pay* and *Sartoris* from so many examples of lost-generation fiction, however, were an intensity of style and a sense of place. Faulkner's roots were deeply regional. In a time of much expatriate writing he was to make a single Mississippi county his measure of the world. What he found there he set down with passion and fury, in a rich, opaque style that was the perfect expression of his own tortured sensibility. His vision one of social ruin and decay, he seized upon a landscape and its people with imaginative boldness which showed him to be anything but a southern realist in the naturalistic tradition. Critics, identifying the themes of violence and terror in his early stories with the whole pattern

of his writing, tagged him as a belated Poe, a craftsman whose chief stock in trade was a callous and deliberate aesthetic of shock.

This line of reasoning was dry and schematic but, on the face of it, quite plausible. True, Faulkner does not lead us into crumbling castles, or dream strange nightmares for us in a bleak house on some lonely moor, or launch us on a bedlam voyage in pursuit of a legendary white whale. Instead, he tells stories of a Mississippi countryside such as any tourist can see for himself—the town of Jefferson, built on the square mile of land a Chickasaw chief deeded to Jason Lycurgus Compson in exchange for a racing mare in 1822; the rutted, dusty roads, back-country store, and ruined plantation house near Frenchman's Bend; eroded pine hills dotted with sparse cornfields; rich bottom land where cotton grows to the dooryards of weathered Negro cabins. The best of Faulkner's fiction has his Yoknapatawpha County for background, a tract of 2,400 square miles lying between the Tallahatchie and Yoknapatawpha rivers in northern Mississippi. There his imagination is completely at home, and this

¹ Department of English, Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

region, painstakingly mapped and landmarked, is as real in every physical and social detail as Hardy's Wessex. At the same time, no place in American fiction has been presented in more somber aspects of history and doom.

Faulkner, who had seen the violence of war at close range, found its counterpart in the life of his own region, which had been living with the effects of violence for generations. Scenes and images of horror haunt the corners of our minds long after his books have been put aside: Popeye's attack on Temple Drake and Red's murder in *Sanctuary*; Quentin Compson's suicide in *The Sound and the Fury*; the slow procession of Addie Bundren's coffin through summer heat in *As I Lay Dying*; the history of violence ending only with the burning of Sutpen's plantation house in *Absalom, Absalom!*, and the idiot who fell in love with a cow in *The Hamlet*. There is implied violence even in the social cleavages of the region, between gone-to-seed descendants of old families like the Sartorises and Compsons; landless, grasping Snopeses who rose from bushwhacking through horse-trading and storekeeping to become the bankers and politicians of the new South; poor white sharecroppers and farmers from the hill country; and Negroes living in tension with the "race which for two hundred years had held them in bondage and from which for another hundred years not even a bloody civil war would have set them free." No other writer has given us so many instances of murder, suicide, rape, incest, miscegenation, and idiocy, for the signs of decay are in Faulkner's people as well as in the surroundings and circumstances of their lives.

Anyone who reads Faulkner carefully, however, will discover that the violence of his milieu is only a part of his subject,

never its final effect. Specifically, his subject is the destruction of the old order in the South and the further corruption of the descendants of that order by a ruthless and competitive industrial society. As a southern writer, he is committed to the historic predicament of his region; as a serious writer, he must explore its social and moral possibilities. Because he has chosen to present his material in parallels of history and myth, not in social tracts thinly disguised as fiction, he has misled those critics who have read him carelessly or naively. The writer who emerges from the total pattern of his work is a figure quite different from the earlier conception of Faulkner as an heir of the Gothic tradition. His writing is both ancestral and prophetic, haunted alike by the beginnings of southern culture and the threat of its extinction.

Viewed against a background of history, the central tension of his work has its origin in a war more remote in time but not in geography. In his books the shadow of Appomattox lengthens across a region which has never forgotten the heroism of the war years or the agony of defeat. This sense of the past continuing in and acting upon the present is an impressive feature of his work. It explains, among other things, those of his characters who seem to think of life as an act of devotion to the dead. These people are like ghosts caught between a real world which they cannot accept and a lost world to which they can never return, citizens in spirit of a nation that ended in 1865.

Hightower, the unfrocked minister of *Light in August*, for example, escapes from the present through memories of his grandfather, a Confederate cavalryman killed during the raid on Yankee military stores at Jefferson. As a young

man he had filled his sermons with wild imagery of galloping horses and gunfire, and he drove his wife to shameful death because he believed that his seed had died with his grandfather in the war. Only in martial fantasy can he find "something to pant with, to be reaffirmed in triumph and desire." Through a long, hot September afternoon, in *Absalom, Absalom!*, Quentin Compson listens to Miss Rosa Coldfield's story of Thomas Sutpen and his deeds. Listening, the boy sees himself as two persons: "Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts, listening, having to listen," and "Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost, but nevertheless having to be one for all of that, since he was born and bred in the deep South." When Charles Mallison, the young hero of *Intruder in the Dust*, faces the crisis of his adolescence, he recalls the words spoken by his uncle two years before:

It's all *now* you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago. For any Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are laid and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other looking up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun . . . yet it's going to begin, we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *this time*. *Maybe this time*.

His immersion in the background and emotional climate of the Civil War might have turned Faulkner into another

elegist of the Confederacy; luckily it did not. His function has been to restore causal tragedy and a sense of the irrational cruelty of things to the dissolving outlines of southern myth. In consequence, he does not rest easily upon the conscience of the romantic-minded South.

There are many approaches to his work, but the best is by way of Malcolm Cowley's introduction to *The Portable Faulkner*. This book is important for two reasons: the selections chosen illustrate the historical perspective of Faulkner's novels and short stories, and the editor's perceptive critical essay traces in detail the unity of theme and design running through all his books. As Cowley points out, Faulkner has been elaborating a tremendous myth of the South, a double labor: "first, to invent a Mississippi county that was like a mythical kingdom, but was complete and living in all details; second, to make his history of Yoknapatawpha County stand as a parable or legend of the Deep South." Although Faulkner's myth-making is "obviously no more intended as a historical account of the country south of the Ohio than *The Scarlet Letter* was intended as a history of Massachusetts," it is nevertheless a significant controlling image by which he has given dramatic force and moral subtlety to his pictures of southern life. In broadest terms his myth is, according to Cowley's interpretation, as follows.

The early settlers in the South were aristocrats, like the Sartorises and Compsons, and ambitious men of no family background, like Thomas Sutpen. They took their land from the Indians, built their houses, planted their crops, in a determination to found a permanent social order for their children. But, because they accepted the institution of slavery,

there was an element of guilt in their design, a curse on their way of life and even on the land itself. Conquest from without—the Civil War—destroyed the old order. The survivors tried to rebuild in the traditional manner, but, lacking the courage and integrity of their fathers, they were corrupted and defeated from within. A new exploiting class, the bush-whacking Snopeses of Civil War days, appeared and with the carpetbaggers climbed to power by economic control and demagoguery. The descendants of the Sartorises and Compsons, holding to a code which keeps them from using the tactics of the Snopeses, to whom all values except cash returns are meaningless, have become frustrated or impotent. They find an outlet in speed and violence, like the jittery young veteran in *Sartoris*; they justify themselves with alcohol and irony, like Quentin Compson's father, or the poses of faded gentility, like his mother, or they commit suicide, like Quentin himself. A few, like Jason Compson, take the codeless Snopes world as they find it and become henchmen of northern finance capitalism. Faulkner's myth is the story of the dissolution of a traditional order and the growth of a new society with its accumulating heritage of enmity, hatred, greed, and guilt.

All of Faulkner's eighteen books fit directly or indirectly into this framework of myth, which is wide enough to take in the larger world as well. The deeper issues of his work are seldom limited to special terms of place and local history. Because his fiction reflects a land and a people fallen into social confusion and moral sterility, it touches also upon the greater problems of our time. Like Quentin Compson's father, Faulkner can look back to a world of "different circumstance, simpler, and therefore,

integer for integer, larger and more heroic and the figures therefore more heroic too, not dwarfed and involved but distinct, uncomplex, who had the gift of loving once or dying once instead of being diffused and scattered creatures drawn blindly from a grab bag and assembled." Unless I am greatly mistaken, Faulkner is writing about the disorders of our time, an age marked by social collapse and the decay of traditional morality. His Yoknapatawpha County is more than a microcosm of the South; it is a compass point in the geography of man's fate.

Absalom, Absalom! is the key novel in the Yoknapatawpha series, for in it Faulkner brought together most of the themes he had been developing from book to book up to that time: the old order in the South, chattel slavery and the evils it engendered, the poor white, incest, miscegenation, fratricide, community shame and guilt, social decay. It is a tragic and at times incredible story, as deeply probing in its search for truth as it is complicated in structure. "Tell me about the South," says Shreve McCannon, who is Quentin Compson's Canadian roommate at Harvard. "What is it like there?" So Quentin begins the story of Thomas Sutpen and his ambitious design to found a plantation dynasty, a plan doomed by his repudiation of Charles Bon, the part-Negro son whom his white son was later to kill, and ended with Sutpen's death under the scythe of Wash Jones, poor-white squatter whose granddaughter Sutpen had ruined in a desperate attempt to get the white male heir of his old age. The only survivor of Sutpen's blood and dream is Jim Bond, as the people of Jefferson called the half-breed descendant of the son Sutpen would never acknowledge. "Now I want you to tell

me one more thing," Shreve says at the end of the story. "Why do you hate the South?"

"I dont hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I dont hate it," he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*

Quentin's agonized reply betrays that mixed sense of love and guilt which Faulkner himself seems to share in his attitude toward southern life. On first reading we wonder why this somber and at times overpowering story should haunt the writer's mind almost as strongly as it affects the despairing consciousness of his narrator. It is easy enough to understand Quentin's preoccupation with Sutpen and the failure of his design, for this chronicle of violence and decay parallels in many ways the dissolution of his own family. But Faulkner's involvement in the dramatic tension of the novel and its atmosphere of doom is less clear. Going back to the book, with the deliberate mystification of plot now explained and the proper time sequence in mind, we discover behind his distorted metaphors and symbols an outline of southern history from which the purely factual and mechanical have been stripped away. *Absalom, Absalom!* is the story of the old order, its beginning, its flaws, its antagonists, its destruction; but this material is presented as if Faulkner can realize the traditional values only in terms of heroic effort or view them only under assault by violent images of war, degeneracy, and crime.

Whether the old way of life truly satisfied the needs of the men who created it, whether it was destroyed from without or corrupted from within—Faulkner holds to the latter view—are matters of relative unimportance. What

is important is the fact that the traditional order established sanctions and defined virtues and obligations by which men could assume the social and moral responsibilities of their humanity. It set up a concept of truth which at the time made the human effort seem worth while, as Faulkner tries to show in his short story, "The Bear." Knowing what the Sartoris world once stood for, he can present with grim realism or ironic humor his vision of the modern South. When he carries his Yoknapatawpha saga into the present day, he judges his Sartorises, Compsons, and McCaslins by the distance they have drifted into a Snopesian society, in which the citizens most at home are mean, grasping people, like Jason Compson; thrill-seekers without moral perception, like Temple Drake; or Popeye, sinister product of an industrial slum and the Memphis underworld.

There is another side to the picture, of course. Faulkner himself is a writer of tradition in an antitraditional society, and he speaks for a social conscience which recognizes values beyond the accepted patterns of expediency or compulsion in human behavior. In most of his novels there is at least one character who stands for social responsibility or the ethical will—Benbow in *Sanctuary*, Byron Bunch in *Light in August*, Ratliff, the wry-humored sewing-machine salesman, in *The Hamlet*. Because they cannot stand by to see some injustice done, they are willing to involve themselves responsibly in the human situation, even at the risk of certain defeat. These people try, but they lose in the end, as Benbow is defeated by class prejudice and political chicanery in his attempt to save an innocent, frightened moonshiner accused of murder and rape; or as Ratliff, that

shrewd, compassionate observer of the human scene, is defeated at last by his aroused cupidity.

Faulkner's myth of the South shows that the old order was moral, but, because of its very nature, it was capable of taint. *The Unvanquished* contains a revealing episode. Mrs. Rose Millard—"Granny" to both young Bayard Sartoris, her grandson, and Ringo, his Negro playmate and companion—assumes the obligations of her code and class when she uses forged requisitions to obtain mules from Yankee troops, sells the animals, prays for forgiveness, and then distributes the money to an impoverished countryside. At first, horse-trading Ab Snopes is useful in her private war against Yankee quartermasters. Later, however, he tricks her into a selfish deed, and a bushwhacker named Grumby kills her. "It wasn't him or Ab Snopes either that kilt her," Ringo says. "It was them mules. That first batch we got for nothing."

What happens in the Sartoris world can happen everywhere, it seems. In *The Hamlet* Ab Snopes and his tribe appear in Frenchman's Bend. The people of that community are neither aristocrats nor poor whites but upright, independent farmers and tradesmen. After Ab wins immunity among them because of this reputation as a barn-burner and his son Flem becomes a clerk in Varner's store, others of the family begin to engulf the village, all of them nibbling at its economic, social, and moral life until there is nothing left to devour. Then they move on to Jefferson, the county seat. There, in *Sanctuary*, Flem Snopes has succeeded Bayard Sartoris as president of a bank, and Clarence Snopes is a state senator fattening on bribery and betrayal.

In Faulkner's world the poor whites and Negroes often rise to levels of social

and moral responsibility impossible for their social betters. This, certainly, is true of the nameless convict who in "Old Man" braves the dangers and disasters of a Mississippi River flood for a woman he does not know and a boat not his own property. *As I Lay Dying* is another story of single and sustained effort by which the Bundrens rise above their cultural lag of poverty and ignorance. When Addie Bundren asked her family to carry her body back to Jefferson for burial, she committed them to an obligation requiring all their strength and peasant tenacity to fulfil, until the progress of her coffin becomes a contest between ethical duty and indifferent nature. At the end old Anse Bundren falls back to his ordinary level, and his marriage to a new wife is a touch of ironic comedy, but for a short time he lifts himself above the mean circumstances of his class.

Faulkner's Negroes stand for endurance and stability in a scene of social disorder and moral dissolution. They are like Ringo in *The Unvanquished*, who with Bayard Sartoris demonstrates that unquestioning friendship which forgets race and social inequalities; like old Dilsey, the cook in *The Sound and the Fury*, who for years sustained obligations the Compsons themselves no longer recognized; or like Sam Fathers in "The Bear," guardian of ancient virtues from whom young Ike McCaslin learned the lessons of "pity and humility and suffering and endurance" so that he was later to relinquish the plantation he had inherited because he believed the land tainted by the evils of slavery. Faulkner's treatment of the Negro is always sympathetic. Again and again he insists that slavery was the curse of the old order and that the Negro, along with the white man, is the victim of a system

which created unequal and often heartless relationships between the races. He views the Negro as the symbol, the physical embodiment, of the inherited guilt which the white South must expiate. "Granted that my people brought the curse onto the land," says Ike McCaslin in "The Bear," "maybe for that reason their descendants alone can—not resist it, not combat it—maybe just endure and outlast it until the curse is lifted. Then your peoples' turn will come because we have forfeited ours." In more than one story Ike McCaslin is Faulkner's spokesman for the social morality of a region.

If the Negro provides an element of order in Faulkner's picture of the South, it is otherwise with the racial hybrid, for miscegenation is in itself evidence of social irresponsibility. In *Absalom, Absalom!* the appearance of Charles Bon brings to Sutpen's Hundred an element of destruction more subtle than the threat of a black strain reintroduced into the white stock; his determination to compel recognition of his sonship puts into motion a series of disasters that ends only with the burning of Sutpen's house a half-century later. In *Light in August* the problem of miscegenation is presented in a different way. Psychologically warped by knowledge of his colored blood, humiliated in childhood by race prejudice, bullied by Protestant fanaticism, Joe Christmas is the victim of warring bloods in one body. Society has shaped him, and society makes him run when he kills to save the last of his manhood from a woman who has reduced his life-processes to the functions of animalism. In *Intruder in the Dust* Lucas Beauchamp's effort to maintain his integrity, not as Negro or white man but simply as man, leads to a social situation filled with violence and suspense.

A study of the Negro's position in the

modern South, *Intruder in the Dust* is another inquiry into the social morality of its people, but with a difference. In earlier books Faulkner recorded the decay of the southern conscience. In this novel he has dramatized the hope of its regeneration. Both as novel of art and social document it has a rightness of subject and form not always found in Faulkner's work. The first sentence announces a murder and suggests the special significance of that act of violence. Vinson Gowrie, the dead man, was white, and Lucas Beauchamp, arrested for the killing, is colored. By noon of the next day, when the sheriff arrives in Jefferson with Lucas in custody, barbershop and pool-room hangers-on have already gathered. While they wait for the Gowries from the pine-hill country, other citizens of Jefferson ignore the possibility of mass violence, and the Negroes stay at home behind closed doors. At a dozen points the novel threatens to explode into mob fury and a lynching, but Faulkner keeps the violence of his theme in check for the simple reason that his book is not about violence at all. It is the story of sixteen-year-old Charles Mallison's initiation into the obligations of his humanity and the involvement of a whole society in that irony of history which has inseparably linked the white man and the Negro in the South.

In this novel, structure and point of view define Faulkner's attitude toward his world. Too often, in earlier books, he and his central characters have merged into one because they existed in the same emotional and moral climate; Quentin Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!* is a good example. But in *Intruder in the Dust* he achieves a principle of dissociation separating his regional sensibility from that spectatorial and critical part of his nature from which his writing springs.

He plunges his youthful hero into a world of physical action, and, when the physical action uncovers social and moral values central to the larger symbolism of the novel, the boy's lawyer-uncle is at hand to supply necessary comment and interpretation. The innocence of youth and the insight of maturity thus set up two angles of vision, one seeing life as he wishes it to be, the other viewing it as it actually is.

In addition to creating an atmosphere of violence in which to develop his real subject, Faulkner uses a deliberately melodramatic plot to explore relationships existing within a small group of people involved in a situation of community guilt, shame, and expiation. There is Lucas Beauchamp, whose arrest sets the story in motion. Lucas is passive; he asserts his innocence but makes no real effort to defend himself because his function is chiefly symbolic. Like Ike McCaslin, he is a grandson of Carothers McCaslin, planter of the old order. Although he has descended through the slave line, he has stubborn family pride. "I don't belong to these new folks," he tells a backwoods bully. "I belong to the old lot. I'm a McCaslin." He has inherited his grandfather's beaver hat, frock coat, and pistol—the symbols of caste; his white kinsman, Carothers Edmonds, has only the land, which came to him through the distaff side. Lucas is the divided society, black and white, of the modern South.

Young Charles Mallison's relationship with Lucas has been complicated in a peculiar manner. While on a hunting trip in November, several years before, he had fallen into an icy creek. Lucas appeared, watched the boy clamber ashore, and then took him to the Negro's cabin, where he was given food and shelter. On one level the boy's misadventure holds

ritual significance; it is baptism, the symbolic death of self-centered man and rebirth in a new communion. The dead season of the year and the food served in Lucas' cabin add to the basic symbolism of the incident. On another level, however, the experience becomes cause for social grievance. Charles Mallison feels that Lucas' apparent indifference and his refusal to accept money have denied the boy's claim to racial superiority. When he hears of the Negro's arrest, his first impulse is to flee. But the obligation of an unpaid debt asserts itself, and the shame of insult to his thwarted sense of race becomes identified with the shame of an emasculated moral will such as social violence betrays. It is to reassert the moral will and social conscience of himself and his community, as much as to prove the innocence of an old Negro, that he goes to a country graveyard with a colored companion and a spinster of good family and there digs up Gowrie's body to find the bullet that killed him. What he finds is proof of a second murder even more shattering to community morale than the shooting of a white man by a Negro. The violence in the background of *Intruder in the Dust* is fratricide; the social and moral issues of the novel touch by implication upon American history.

Gavin Stevens, Jefferson lawyer and Charles Mallison's uncle, is the liberal citizen of the South. He has appeared previously in *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses*, and he is the central figure in *Knight's Gambit*, a new collection of stories in which he follows the uncertain course of justice through the cross-currents and backwashes of southern life. Understanding Lucas' predicament, he must, because of his background and training, be ruled by causes and cases. But he is the first to realize the moral sig-

nificance of his nephew's reckless and desperate act. "It took an old woman and two children for that, to believe truth for no other reason than that it was truth, told by an old man in a fix deserving pity and belief, to someone capable of pity even when none of them really believed him." With a southerner's love of rhetoric and the rational man's insight into the nature of things, he argues with passionate conviction the idea of the South's homogeneity and the right of its citizens to settle its problems without help or hindrance. Lucas Beauchamp—the black race—will eventually be free, he insists. "But it won't be next Tuesday. Yet people in the North believe it can be compelled even into next Monday by the simple ratification by votes of a printed paragraph. . . . I only say that the injustice is ours, the South's. We must expiate and abolish it ourselves."

Miss Habersham is another character who recognizes the obligation of class. An old woman wearing cheap mail-order dresses but forty-dollar handmade shoes and fifteen-dollar gloves—again the symbols of caste—she represents a certain

idea of quality in the old order. She helps in the desecration of Vinson Gowrie's grave for the same reason Rosa Millard stole and sold Yankee mules during the Civil War: to protect those more helpless than she. There are other characters from the Yoknapatawpha scene—the sheriff with regard for his office, the jailkeeper unwilling to risk his life defending a Negro but still risking it, the Gowries from the pine hills whose social feeling is to dislike the Negro just as the Negro's traditional role is to despise them for their lack of that quality for which Miss Habersham stands. Together they bring to life social relationships and ethical anxieties in a human world and not within a framework of abstract assumption.

William Faulkner has always gone his own way as a novelist, indifferent alike to critical opinion and public sentiment. Yet he has made his solitary position a post of strategy and advantage in uncovering the social conscience of the South. His Yoknapatawpha County is a part of the present world, his Jefferson the geographical center of a moral universe.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

GRACE SEILER¹

THE population of New England has been somewhat wittily described as saints, sinners, and the Beecher family. There were so many of the Beecher family and so very talented and distinguished were they that, if there were no saints and even no sinners in New England, it would still be a remarkable land—a land of great and beneficent genius.

¹ Chapel Hill, N.C.

And the greatest of all the Beechers was Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe, wife, mother, author, and ardent reformer, born in Litchfield, Connecticut, June 14, 1811.

Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was the true daughter of Lyman Beecher and of New England—an excellent heritage, no doubt, but a hard one for a little person who delighted in warmth of sunshine and color and who longed to be praised and

petted and sheltered. For the Reverend Lyman Beecher, vigorous, "made for action," despising luxury, and exulting in the hardships of battle, would have scorned a daughter who shunned the high places. And New England coddles none of her children.

The early nineteenth century in New England was a time of peculiar turbulence, especially in theological circles. It was an age of transition. The Puritan renaissance was in full swing, and it was stubbornly resisted. In the state of Connecticut the standing order was making a last desperate fight for its life. In the Beecher family theology was the main interest. Lyman Beecher was a Congregationalist minister and a sturdy pillar of the standing order. He believed in the order with all his might, and he worked furiously to maintain it, preaching early and late for revivals, running off sermons, as he himself said, each one fresh, like bullets from a mold. The old parsonage fairly rang with his prayers and pleadings and with his discussions with visiting divines.

The small Harriet quickly took up a position very characteristic of all her later life. Although not understanding all the issues, perhaps, she became a sympathetic and ardent partisan. Her indignation against the "Democrats" blazed forth. She knew that her father was right. She knew it instinctively; but, if proof were needed, was he not defending the New England of the Puritans, the ideal church and state that they came hither to establish; the Church of the Fathers? Suddenly she became conscious of the glory of her inheritance; she belonged to "a consecrated race, a race especially called and chosen by God for some great work on earth." So she took up her place on the hilltop, and there she remained, a resolute little figure often

buffeted by storms, even bowed low by the blasts, but she rose gallantly, for whatever the faults of Hatty Beecher or of Harriet Beecher Stowe, she never lacked courage to defend with all her strength and against all opposition what she believed to be right. She was true to her heritage. And she gained a clearness of vision; she experienced a feeling of exaltation that comes only to those who dwell on the heights.

Harriet's gentle mother, Roxana Foote, kept quietly aloof from all scenes of conflict. She baked and cleaned and spun, taught a little school to help out the family income, cared for her eight children, entertained boarders and visiting ministers, and at times slipped away unnoticed to decorate the parsonage chairs with patterns of gilt and silver or, perhaps, to paint a garland on the best-room carpet. Finally (1816) she slipped away altogether with a "*more* than willingness" to die which her husband ascribed to her perfect spiritual peace. Harriet was only five years old at the time, but her mother's image remained with her always, like that of some sweetly pictured saint.

Lyman Beecher mourned Roxana, mourned her vehemently; he could never hear her name mentioned without emotion; forty years later, on a packet of her letters he wrote, "Roxana, beloved still." But life must go on. He needed a helpmeet; the parsonage must have a mistress; and so, about a year after Roxana's death, the little Beechers, wide-eyed with wonder, gathered round to greet a new mother. She was Harriet Porter from Maine, a "beautiful lady, very fair, with bright blue eyes, and soft auburn hair," who seemed more like a strange princess than their own mamma. But she smiled kindly and, taking Harriet on her lap, allowed her to play with her rings.

However, as time went on she smiled less and less frequently. Her duties were many; the family was large; she herself became the mother of four children. She loved quiet and neatness and order. She looked down a little severely on her boisterous household. Even her husband's habits and lapses she found a bit trying. When he put into the missionary box the roll of money that she had been saving for a new parlor carpet, she sighed impatiently; and one evening as he read aloud to her from Jonathan Edward's *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, she sprang from her chair and swept out of the room, exclaiming indignantly, "Dr. Beecher, I shall not listen to another word of that slander of my Heavenly Father!" When she had leisure time she took refuge from the family and behind closed doors gave herself up to religious devotions. Henry Ward Beecher writes, "My mother that brought me up I never thought of loving. It never occurred to me. I was afraid of her . . . she was cold . . . not easy to approach . . . I knew that at about twilight she prayed; and I had a shrinking from going past her door at that time." So the second mother came to seem almost as far away from her children as did Roxana Foote. Her influence was even less positive.

It was quite otherwise with the Reverend Lyman Beecher. His presence, dynamic, electric, pervaded the house and touched everyone in it. Intense, earnest, full of enthusiasm, "he seemed never to know when he was tired, or that anyone with him could be." Whenever he had a point to be carried or work to be done, writes Mrs. Stowe, he worked the whole family up to a pitch of fervent zeal in which the strength of each seemed quadrupled. And Harriet, also, was sucked into the vortex of enthusiasm by her father's well-pointed declaration that he

"wished Harriet was a boy, she would do more than any of them." This remark, although serving as praise for Harriet and as a reproof for the boys, was made a little regretfully; for women, though "good in their way," could not be expected to accomplish much in the world outside. Had Harriet been a boy, the Reverend Lyman Beecher would have had eight sturdy helpers in holding up the mighty structure of the ancient faith instead of only seven, for he was determined that his sons should follow in his footsteps. He began their training early, teaching them to think and to reason, to argue and to prove hard points in theology, and even to prove their own sinfulness! He hated what he called "nat'ral religion." "They say everybody knows about God naturally. A lie!" he shouted. "All such ideas are by teaching!" Harriet, although she was shut out from the ministry, drank in the arguments of all these discussions. When she was twelve years old she wrote a composition entitled: "Can the Immortality of the Soul Be Proved by the Light of Nature?" No, she argued on every page, it cannot; all such knowledge comes through teaching, through revelation. Harriet's essay was read at the school exhibition. Reverend Beecher on hearing it, a condensation of his own arguments, brightened up. "Who wrote that composition?" he demanded. "Your daughter, sir," was the answer. "It was," writes Mrs. Stowe later, "the proudest moment of my life."

Never was father so idolized by his children as was Lyman Beecher. Harriet chose him early for her friend and counselor, and she was allotted a niche in his attic study. She tells us that here she had a kind of sheltered feeling as she sat and watched her father writing, turning his books, and speaking from time to time in a loud, earnest whisper. She vaguely felt

that he was about some holy and mysterious work quite beyond her own comprehension, and she was careful never to disturb him by question or remark. The books ranged around filled her, too, with a solemn awe. There were Bell's *Sermons*, Bonnett's *Inquiries*, Bogue's *Essays*, Toplady on *Predestination*, Boston's *Fourfold State*, and other works of that kind that she looked at wistfully, without even a hope of getting something interesting out of them. One day she found a sermon on the death of George II, beginning: "George! George! George is no more." This somewhat dramatic opening caused her to put that one discourse into her own private library. Then her father brought home Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*. There was drama here, surely! She wrote, "What wonderful stories those! Stories, too, about my own country. Stories that made me feel the very ground I trod on to be consecrated by some special dealing of God's Providence!"

She was naturally of an imaginative type of mind. She was one little girl in a vast household composed chiefly of grownups and boys. She received little attention. Even her questions were often disregarded. The magic of poetry, the intricacies of theology, goodness, and wickedness were very much confused in her mind. It was a puzzling world that she lived in. Trying hard to understand it, she became abstracted, absent. Then, suddenly, intently, she began writing a long poem, a drama, *Cleon*. The poem was never finished. One day her sister pounced down upon her, telling her that she must not waste her time writing poetry but must discipline her mind by reading Butler's *Analogy*. A year later she entered her sister's school at Hartford.

Harriet was still pondering the question of Christianity, the problems of con-

viction and conversion, when she returned to Litchfield in 1825 for her summer vacation. When she went to church she felt lonely among so many Christians. She had striven earnestly to think herself a dreadful sinner but had never succeeded. Then, one Sunday, her father forgot his theology and preached a religious sermon on the great love of Jesus and his care for the soul. Straightway his little girl believed herself to be converted and was happy, so very happy indeed, and the thing had come about so easily and naturally that Catherine and others thought there must be something wrong about it. It looked suspiciously like natural religion, and so they questioned her; they argued with her and soon succeeded in making her as miserable as they could desire. She remained so for several years, tortured by spiritual doubts and misgivings. "I do nothing right," she wrote to her brother Edward, "... my sins take away all my happiness"; and she sank into a state of gloom and despondency that threatened her health. But she would not give up. She was more sensitive than Lyman Beecher, but she had his fighting spirit, his tenacity. Moreover, she felt a sense of injustice. New England was hard, her father was hard, she felt resentful, even rebellious and, at times, a little sorry for herself. If, she argued, she had been, as her standards stated, born "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to evil," was not this an excuse for sin? If her Creator had brought her into being in this state, was it not an act of simple justice to restore her mind to a normal condition?

The New England theology was too cold for her. She shuddered beneath it; "These hard old New England divines," she wrote later, "were the poets of metaphysical philosophy, who built systems

in an artistic fervor, and felt self exhale from beneath them as they rose into higher regions of thought. But, where theorists and philosophers tread with sublime assurance, woman often follows with bleeding footsteps; women are always turning from the abstract to the individual, and feeling where the philosopher only thinks." Intensely feminine always, Harriet had all a woman's distrust of abstract reasoning, of logic. "Between you and me," she says confidentially, in what is perhaps her best book, *Oldtown Folks*, "if there is a golden calf worshipped in our sanctified New England, its name is Logic . . . the parson burns incense before it with a most sacred innocence of intention. He believes that sinners can be converted by logic." Harriet Beecher longed for warmth, for shelter, for love. Even in her daily life among her friends this desire to be loved formed the great motive for all her actions. She needed a God of love, also, rather than a King of kings. It was because they had made her suffer so intensely that, later in her novels, she preached so furiously against the harsher Puritan doctrines, although they always held her somewhat, just as Lyman Beecher and New England held her, rebel against their relentlessness as she might. It was through Catherine's influence that she was restored finally to a more tranquil and healthful frame of mind. Catherine had conquered her own soul-struggles and had come through, the inventor of the Beecher theology of her generation, common to her and Harriet and Henry Ward: "Christianity the revelation of a suffering God." In a letter to her friend Georgiana May written in July, 1832, Harriet Beecher sums up her theology, "Well, there is a heaven,—a heaven,—a world of love, and love after all, is the lifeblood, the existence, the all in all of mind."

With this conclusion she resolved that thenceforth she would forget herself as much as possible and think of the happiness of others, and so, when, a little later, Lyman Beecher, trembling with emotion, came home and announced his momentous decision to accept the presidency of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, and so to bring about in a hurry the Millennium, which had seemed a little slow in coming, Harriet joined in his plans with enthusiasm. "The West," cried Lyman Beecher in his *Plea for the West*, "is a young empire of mind, and power, and wealth, and free institutions, rushing up to a giant manhood. . . . The West is destined to be the great central power of the nation." And again, in a letter to Catherine in July, 1830, "If we gain the West, all is safe; if we lose it, all is lost. . . . I have thought seriously of going to Cincinnati . . . to spend the remnant of my days in its conversion." And now, after two years of prayerful consideration, he had made his decision. He was, he believed, God's chosen vessel; he must save the West, and of course his children must help him. Harriet was eager. She felt that she, too, was made for action. She longed to make the world feel her existence, and, moreover, she wanted to show Lyman Beecher that women can count for something outside the home walls. To be sure, she couldn't preach; but there were other missions. She could teach. She and Catherine would "turn over the West by means of *model schools*" in its capital. "We have come to the conclusion," she wrote to Miss May, "that the work of teaching will never be rightly done till it passes into *female* hands. . . . We intend . . . ourselves to set the example of what females can do in this way."

It was in the autumn of 1832 that the Beecher family left New England bound

for the West. In October they reached Cincinnati and took up their abode at Walnut Hills. Harriet had reached her destination. Here she was to make her home, with longer or shorter interruptions, for the next eighteen years. She was in the West; but somehow it looked less fair than it had appeared from a distance. It was even a little crude. Pigs ran free in the streets of its capital. Harriet's first letter home was a bit wistful. "We do love our Hartford friends dearly," she wrote, and then, "We did talk of keeping Thanksgiving, but perhaps we should all have felt something of the text, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'" The house at Walnut Hills was disappointing. It was "the most inconvenient, ill-arranged, good-for-nothing, and altogether to be execrated affair ever put together." But Harriet Beecher had a sense of humor. It cropped up continually in the most unexpected places. It was for her a saving grace, and it stood her in good stead here. "The back parlor," she wrote, "has but one window . . . and has its lower half painted to keep out what little light there is. I need scarcely add that our landlord is an old bachelor and of course acted up to the light that he had, though he left little enough of it for his tenants."

As time went on, Harriet lost her gaiety. The school work was exceedingly strenuous and not altogether satisfactory. The old troublesome thoughts returned. She became tired, listless, and homesick for New England. Again she took up her pen.

"And so I am to write a story," she began, "but of what and where? Shall it be radiant with the sky of Italy or eloquent with the *beau ideal* of Greece? Shall it breathe odor and langour from the Orient, or chivalry from the Occident; gaiety from France, or vigor from

England? . . . No, let me turn to my own New England; the land of bright fires and strong hearts; the land of deeds and not of words; the land of fruits and not of flowers; the land often spoken against yet always respected; 'the latchet of whose shoes the nations of the earth are not worthy to unloose.' " This story, "Uncle Lot," won the prize offered by the editor of the *Western Monthly Magazine*, a prize for which Edgar Allan Poe was also a contestant.

During the same summer (1834) Harriet Beecher made her first visit to New England since leaving it two years before. It was on this journey that she saw Niagara for the first time. She writes of it romantically, "My mind whirled off it seemed to me into a new strange world. It seemed unearthly, like the strange dim images in the book of Revelation. . . . I thought of the great white throne; the rainbow breaking around it; the throne in sight like unto an emerald; . . . I felt the very rock tremble under me with a sort of joy. I was so maddened that I could have gone, too, if it had gone."

Well! Harriet Beecher was a little too much inclined to indulge in such rapturous ecstasies, to lose herself in day-dreaming, in reverie. Her father viewed such symptoms with alarm. "Revery," he declared, "is a delightful intoxication into which the mind is thrown. I once knew a person who was wont to retire into the garden of revery. I told him he must give up the habit or be damned!" Lyman Beecher knew his daughter's weakness. She was impractical, a little careless, and inclined to romantic drifting. She must be cured. His thoughts turned to Calvin Stowe, then a professor, indeed the only professor, at Lane Seminary. Stowe was solid—stolid, one is tempted to say—orthodox, and lately a widower. Moreover, the Reverend Mr.

Beecher felt that Stowe was indispensable to him in his work at the seminary, and, since the death of his wife, Professor Stowe had been so dejected that he had made up his mind to go back to New England. Lyman Beecher had his way with all his children, and, when Harriet returned, her attention was directed to Professor Stowe. There was certainly nothing about Calvin Stowe to inspire romantic dreaming. Although he was only ten years older than Harriet, he appeared as a contemporary of her father's rather than her own. He was melancholy, stubborn, and anything but prepossessing in appearance. "Big, burly, sledge-hammer, with a loud voice," was the description of Samuel Bowles, who met him early in the seventies. He devoted himself to scholarly pursuits, setting down theological and Hebrew learning on endless bits of paper in a handwriting which Harriet has described as "Arabic." As if these occupations were not sufficiently remote, he entertained phantoms—his visions, he called them. Calvin Stowe was not Harriet's ideal lover, surely. But in 1834 Professor Stowe was in distress. He was so very low-spirited that his friends feared that he might lose his reason. Harriet Beecher's heart went out to anyone in trouble. She was sorry for Professor Stowe. He was so very sad and so helpless! After a little urging from her father and from her brother Henry Ward, she became his wife.

Harriet's marriage to Calvin Stowe brought real cares and left little time for reverie or mysticism. Beginning with twin girls, children came crowding into the professor's home. It was difficult to obtain suitable household help. Payments from the seminary, which was then rich only in land and faith, were often delayed. The wearing daily question was, "How shall we live?" Mrs.

Stowe tried writing stories, little stories of New England. One of her friends has given us an amusing picture of Harriet's attempts at authorship, seated in the kitchen, one baby in a clothes basket at her feet, two others tumbling about on the floor, and a new maid who constantly interrupted with questions concerning gingerbread, baked beans, and pumpkin.

Mrs. Stowe had much real affection for her husband; there can be no doubt about that—"If you were not already my dearly loved husband," she wrote to him in 1849, "I should certainly fall in love with you"—but she learned early that it was she, not Calvin Stowe, who must bear the brunt of responsibility for maintaining the household. Her husband certainly appreciated her, but he was usually not helpful or even considerate. Nevertheless, it was he who divined his wife's future. In 1842 he had written to her thus: "My dear, you must be a literary woman. It is so written in the book of fate. Make all your calculations accordingly. Get a good stock of health and brush up your mind. Drop the *E* out of your name. It only encumbers it. Write yourself always Harriet Beecher Stowe, which is a name euphonious, flowing, and full of meaning. Then, my word for it, your husband will lift up his head in the gate and your children will rise up and call you blessed."

Yet, the meager answer to this summons for the next nine years was a few additions to *The Mayflower* and a tract, *Earthly Care, a Heavenly Discipline*. Harriet Beecher Stowe should have known whether it were so or not. She had had enough earthly care, and to spare. At times she became impatient. "It is a dark, sloppy, rainy, muddy, disagreeable day," she wrote to her husband, June 16, 1845—Professor Stowe's duties at the seminary often took him away from

home—"and I have been working hard all day in the kitchen, washing dishes, looking into closets, and seeing a great deal of that dark side of domestic life which a housekeeper may who will investigate too curiously into the minutiae in warm, damp weather. . . . I am sick of the smell of sour milk, and sour meat, and sour everything . . . and altogether I feel as if I never wanted to eat again." She was often ill. She read *Night Thoughts* and talked of death. "It appears to me," she wrote to her husband on one occasion, "that I am not probably destined for long life." Mrs. Stowe was overburdened with work, and she was in poor health. During a horrible epidemic of cholera in Cincinnati she had lost her youngest child. Surely she may be forgiven if she lingers a little over the theme of death or even if at times she seems to take a melancholy pleasure in picturing herself a frail little body, lingeringly, patiently, courageously, fading away.

On the whole, however, Harriet Beecher Stowe was too sane and had far too much to do to allow herself to become morbid; and when her husband in his turn began to talk of dying, she answered him humorously but withal a little brusquely; "My dear Soul, I received your most melancholy effusion, and I am sorry to find it is so. I entirely agree and sympathize. Why didn't you engage the two tombstones—one for you and one for me? . . . To see things as through a glass darkly is your infirmity, you know."

In 1849 Professor Stowe accepted an appointment as divinity professor in Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine. He could not leave Lane Seminary until he should find someone to take his place, but it was decided that Mrs. Stowe, with three of the children, should go ahead to Brunswick. It was a hard journey for the

little woman: keeping track of the children, the accounts, and the baggage; pushing her way through hurrying crowds; looking out for trunks; and bargaining with hackmen. And at Brunswick she plunged into the making of a new home, painting and papering walls, laying carpets, re-covering sofas. In the midst of her labors she received a dark letter from her husband saying that he was sick in bed and didn't expect ever to see his family again, asking what she should do if she were left a widow, urging prudence in the case of his death. "I read the letter," wrote Harriet to a friend, "poke it into the stove, and proceed."

It was shortly after coming to Brunswick that Mrs. Stowe began her most famous book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in her forty-first year. For long, both North and South had striven to avoid an open break over slavery, but now the whole atmosphere was ominous with the threat of the approaching storm. While still at Cincinnati, with only a river between her and a slave state, a mob broke out against the abolitionists, destroying a printing press and threatening other violence. At first she tried to maintain a position of neutrality. But Harriet Beecher Stowe was far too sympathetic to remain neutral. The Fugitive Slave Law, which required the citizens of free states to aid in catching and returning runaway slaves, caused great indignation in the North. Mrs. Stowe's sense of justice was roused. When she received a letter from Mrs. Edward Beecher which said, "Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something to make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is," immediately Mrs. Stowe glimpsed a vision. Crushing the letter in her hand, she said, "I will write something. I will if I live." The death of Uncle Tom was the first chapter

written. She tells us that this scene came to her like a vision while she was in church. When she began to publish "Uncle Tom" in the *National Era* on June 5, 1851, she had no idea how it was going to end. It was announced for three months; it ran ten. As it drew near its conclusion, John P. Jewett, a Boston publisher, wished to make a book of it and offered to give the author a half-share of the profits. The offer was refused because her husband was "altogether too poor to assume any such risk." The final agreement was for a 10 per cent royalty on all sales. This brought her \$10,000 within four months. When the money was put into Professor Stowe's hands, he was a little stunned. "Why," he said helplessly, "I never saw so much money in my life."

The popularity of the book was unbounded, and its circulation was without precedent. No work of fiction in the English language was ever so widely sold. In a short time it had been translated into every European language and also into Arabic and Armenian. Harriet Beecher Stowe's literary renown filled the earth, until Oliver Wendell Holmes could justly say:

If every tongue that speaks her praise
For whom I shape my tinkling phrase
Were summoned to the table,
The vocal chorus that would meet
Of mingling accents harsh or sweet,
From every land and tribe, would beat
The polyglots of Babel.

Briton and Frenchman, Swede and Dane,
Turk, Spaniard, Tartar of Ukraine,
Hidalgo, Cossack, Cadi,
High Dutchman and Low Dutchman too,
The Russian serf, the Polish Jew,
Arab, Armenian, and Mantchoo,
Would shout, "We know the lady."

Many attempts have been made to explain the book, none of which has been entirely successful. Often melodramatic,

sentimental, faulty in style, plot, and characterization, it is one of the two books recommended by Tolstoi to the Russians. Modern fiction would call for more differentiation in the dialogue of the different characters and for more unity of structure; and yet there are stories with all these merits that do not last a year. Perhaps the best criticism of the book is that of George Sand: "I cannot say she has talent as one understands it in the world of letters, but she has genius as humanity feels the need of genius." The author herself explains *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in this way: "God wrote it," she declared; "I took his dictation."

At any rate, as late as 1899 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, almost fifty years after its publication, led in popularity all the English fiction in the New York Public Library. It has repeatedly swept the stage in many versions. Indeed, it is still popular, two moving-picture versions having been made, one in 1917, the other in 1927. At present M-G-M plans a Technicolor version, with Margaret O'Brien as Little Eva and Lena Horne as Eliza. One might almost say of it in the words of Uncle Tom, "You may mutilate this old black body, but mah soul—mah soul goes marching on!"

For a time, at least, the power of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was so great as to make the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law impossible. It added much to the gathering volume of antislavery sentiment, and Mrs. Stowe was hailed as the leader, even the creator, of the contemporary movement against slavery.

In 1853 Harriet Beecher Stowe made her first visit to Europe. Arriving at Liverpool on April 11, she was everywhere welcomed with enthusiasm. Her trip through the country resembled the progress of a monarch. Stations were thronged and streets were crowded with

people eager to see the famous author, and often, when she was driving on the roads, the carriage would be stopped by persons who came to offer flowers. Mrs. Stowe reveled in all this honor. She found ducal houses like fairy palaces. She wrote contentedly of noiseless-stepping servants who anticipated her every desire. "If I were an old Sèvres china jar, I could not have more careful handling than I do," she sighed happily. Professor Stowe found all this very wearing. He soon returned home to his Hebrew and Arabic. But his wife went joyously on.

With the death of her eldest son, Henry (1857), Mrs. Stowe suffered the greatest shock of her life. In spite of her acceptance of milder religious doctrines, her early training was too strong for her. All her old doubts surged back. Her son had never experienced conversion. Was he eternally lost? Harriet Beecher Stowe's soul was never shaken by the wrongs of slavery as by the enormity of the doctrine of eternal punishment. For a time she sought consolation in spiritualism, but it gave her little satisfaction, for she never really believed in it. She began writing a new novel, *The Minister's Wooing*, which is in fact a long attack on the harsh Puritan theology. This story appeared first as a serial in the *Atlantic Monthly*; James Russell Lowell, then the editor, after having read the first few chapters, praised it extravagantly. Mrs. Stowe, he predicted, now that she had taken her stand on New England ground, would create characters superior to any produced by Dickens or Thackeray or Smollett. A little later, however, alarmed at the "doctrinal casuistry" appearing in the story, he wrote anxiously, "Let your moral take care of itself, and remember that an author's writing-desk is something infinitely higher than a pulpit." But to Harriet Beecher Stowe nothing

could be higher than a pulpit. Although at times she liked to think of herself as pure artist, yet in reality she understood nothing of the doctrine of art for art's sake. She was a daughter of the Puritans. She kept their height and looked down at the world from a moral point of view. At times, it is true, the very intensity of this moral earnestness made her an artist. But it was certainly not her aim to produce works of pure pleasure.

Always, in the study of the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, one is impressed by her loyalty, her sympathy, her energy and industry. When the Civil War broke out, she worked almost frantically, as if she felt that she personally were responsible; it may be that she did think so, for it is said that when she called on President Lincoln—she felt that he was "too slow," and she, like her father before her, had little patience with delay—he greeted her gallantly with, "And so this is the little woman who caused the great war!" Be that as it may, she was untiring in her efforts. Moreover, she gave generously of her own money, and she gave her son, Frederick.

After the war was over, she spent her winters in Florida, where she worked for the welfare of the Negro and for the upbuilding of the South. She labored in behalf of the church, but her dislike for the grimness of Calvinism led her to become an Episcopalian. She wrote constantly, lengthening the number of her books from ten to thirty-three. And once she undertook public readings. Her first reading was not a success; before the second she brushed back her short gray hair until it stood stiffly erect. "Look," she called, "now I am exactly like my father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, when he was going to preach." This time she carried her audience with her.

Growing old, Harriet Beecher Stowe

returned to New England to spend her last years at her home in Hartford, Connecticut. Many of her friends had already left her. Lyman Beecher, who, years before, had slipped off into a dreamy absent-mindedness, died January 10, 1863. Calvin Stowe died some twenty years later; and, soon after, his wife, like her father before her, became absent, seeming to live in a kind of perpetual day-dream, wandering about through her gardens and those of Mark Twain, who lived on an adjoining lot, and gathering flowers. Once, when she was quite elderly, Henry Ward Beecher sent her a letter which he had received from a friend in

Germany condoling with him on the supposed event of her death, a rumor which had somehow got itself started in Europe. This letter afforded her no little entertainment, especially its closing expression, "Peace to her ashes." "I guess," she observed with a humorous smile and a dash of her old spirit, "the gentleman would think my ashes pretty lively if he was here." She died July 1, 1896, an entirely womanly little person who had years earlier become a world figure and who has in her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* contributed a book which, many will concede, is likely to be given a permanent place among the world's literary treasures.

Alexander Pope's Use of the Implied Dramatic Speaker

REBECCA PRICE PARKIN¹

THE concept of the implied dramatic speaker is closely related to the concept of tone. If we define the speaker as the implied fictional character, not identifiable with the author, who speaks the poem, then tone may be defined as the attitude of this speaker toward the subject of the poem. A functional corollary of the dramatic-speaker concept is the implied audience. Just as the speaker need not be, and usually is not, identical with the author, so the implied audience is an element of the poem itself and does not necessarily coincide with a given chance reader. In terms of these concepts a poem may be defined as the state of tension set up between an implied speaker and an implied audience, the degree and kind of tension being determined by

the subject matter and the speaker's attitude toward it.

The four general rhetorical ends which the device and its corollaries serve are: *unity*, *objectivity*, *dramatic tension* and *particularity*, and *identification with a specific ideological convention*. *Unity*, because the dramatic speaker is ordinarily not changed within a given poem. Everything said is said from the point of view of a single person, who may develop, as any fictional character may, but who does not become another. *Objectivity*, because the device enables the poet to shed the trammels of his own personality and view the issue through the eyes of the most interesting and relevant dramatic personality that can be brought to bear on the situation. *Dramatic tension* and *particularity*, because the speaker is a

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concrete individual in a particular situation which contains an element of conflict—that is, the speaker is presented as a person reacting to some aspect of the universe and trying, by the device of persuasive rhetoric, to induce his implied audience to react as he does or at least to understand his reaction. The fourth function, *identification with a specific ideological convention*, involving, as a rule, delimitation in time and place, permits ellipsis and promotes compression—two factors which play an important role in much good poetry, and especially in Alexander Pope's.

It is obvious not only that poets differ from one another in their handling of the dramatic speaker but that an individual poet may vary his use of the device from poem to poem. All poets, however, are to some extent circumscribed in their treatment of the dramatic speaker by such conventions as those of a school or a genre.

In his *Pastorals* we see Pope at his most circumscribed in this matter. Since the pastoral is one of the most conventional of genres and in its very essence a texture of traditional artifices, departures from its conventions are attended with particular peril. Few successful radical departures from its main traditions have been made by English writers of pastorals, and Pope chose to make none at all. The character and stance of the implied speaker of his *Pastorals* is "purer," closer to the traits of the hypothetical type speaker for the genre, than, for instance, in *The Shepherdes Calendar* or *Lycidas*. This is especially evident in the relation of Pope's speaker to his subject matter. His stance is formal, restrained, courtly, and stylized to a much greater degree than is the case with either Spenser's or Milton's speakers. He

reveals nothing about himself except the conventional fact that he is a young poet with classical training and aspirations, exercising himself in the pastoral landscape. Throughout the poems he maintains a decorous distance between himself and the subjects. He permits no intrusions of nonpastoral detail, and not once does he himself become passionately involved in the action and thunder forth about a non-Arcadian issue, as does Milton's speaker in such a passage as "Blind mouths!"

Eloisa to Abelard, however, is in direct contrast with the *Pastorals* in this matter. The ceremonial distance between speaker and subject in the *Pastorals* gives way to a situation in which the speaker, Eloisa, is also the principal actor. In part a concomitant of this change, the tone of *Eloisa to Abelard* is tense, urgent, and immediate, contrasting with the serenity and aesthetic exclusion which prevail in the *Pastorals*. The reason for the change is a difference in aim. Pope in the heroic epistle is striving not for restraint but for an impression of unrestraint, of passion so strong that it can barely be contained within the bounds of communicability. For securing this tonal effect the advantage of being able to choose the principal sufferer in the tragedy as the speaker is obvious. The scattered details of the story are brought into sharp dramatic focus; and the reader, moreover, is given the illusion of being inside Eloisa's mind, seeing the crucial issue balanced back and forth as the speaker is torn between the pagan affirmation of sexual passion and the Christian denial of the body. The fact that the poet can count on an audience familiar with the implications of this ideological antithesis is a favoring circumstance. He need waste no time on definition and ex-

position but can grapple immediately with the heart of the subject.

The speakers of the *Rape of the Lock* and the *Dunciad*, both poems being mock-epics, have certain features in common, the most notable of which is the mock-heroic stance. This is an ironic, and hence oblique, attitude, marked by special sensitivity to the discrepancy between heroic profession and human performance. Both speakers are primarily concerned with establishing a norm and exhibiting deviation from it; and in both cases the norm is established by implication rather than by exposition. Both speakers are sophisticates and assume worldly sophistication in their audiences. As for the differences in their characters and attitudes, the differences are not so much absolute as occasional, and the conditioning evinced is comparable to that which would occur if the same person, holding the same basic opinions, were on one occasion addressing a learned society and on another endeavoring to be amusing at a ladies' tea-party; for it is clear that the implied audience of the *Dunciad's* straightforward bawdry is composed of men only, whereas the implied audience of the *Rape of the Lock* contains both women and men, though the poem is slanted somewhat toward feminine auditors. This is not to say that the *Rape* is the less bawdy poem; on the contrary. But the scatology in *Duncaid*, Book II, for example, is gross and unequivocal; whereas such lines as Belinda utters in complaint against the Baron—

Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!^a

—can be taken in either an innocent or an extremely scandalous sense. This is one of the many instances in the two

poems of modification of attitude or mode of statement in deference to the implied audience. In thus accommodating himself to the subject matter of the *Rape* and to its presumed audience, however, the poet has not sacrificed scope. He merely gets it by indirection and implication and, more especially, by symbolism—as when the game of ombre stands for the war between the sexes—while the speaker of the *Dunciad*, as is particularly evident in Book IV, deals with major issues, on the whole, directly.

The implied speaker of the *Essay on Man* has taken up his stand in a pulpit, and his relationship to his implied audience is comparable to that of a preacher to his congregation. It is a formal relationship, but, when man's soul is at stake, by no means an unemotional one. It is important to emphasize here that the speaker's tone is closer to that of a great evangelical preacher—for instance, John Bunyan—than to the lucid didacticism of a Lucretius. *How shall a man be saved?* It was the dominant question in the England of Bunyan and Milton. The speaker asks it in this poem with no less sense of urgency; but, in conformity with the pose of enlightened reason fashionable with his presumed audience, he states and answers his question in such a way as to give the illusion of logical argument. This speaker is a master of persuasive rhetoric. He is dealing with a subject which in its profounder aspects is incapable of logical demonstration; but, convinced of the rightness of his ends, he gives the poem a logical façade, the better to entice the eighteenth-century auditor into the building. In so far as reason can be applied to religious mysticism, the speaker does have reason on his side; but, as the poem itself emphasizes in Epistle II, reason is a weaker ally than passion.

^a *Rape of the Lock*, IV, 175-76.

As a result, the tone of the poem is not primarily one of coolly reasoned didacticism but one of passionate moral earnestness, willing to avail itself of any rhetorical devices which will help it communicate conviction and urgency.

The subject of the *Essay on Criticism* is "the qualities of a good critic"; and it is interesting to observe that the speaker, whose duty it is to expound them, also exemplifies them. If he did not, the poem would fail to achieve its end; for as a piece of persuasive rhetoric its success depends largely on the extent to which it can convince the reader that the speaker is a reliable guide. A person who presumes to prescribe how others shall write or criticize must first induce confidence in his own literary judgment and experience. Pope has therefore endowed this speaker with just those traits which an urbane and judicious eighteenth-century audience would have approved.

Since the Augustan reader was especially wary of extreme doctrines and likely to feel that truth lay in the middle of the road, this speaker adopts the *via media* position on virtually every problem with which he deals. Though a substantiation of this requires a complete reading of the poem—for every line and every element of the poem is instinct with it—the following citations are typical.

On the question of imitating the Ancients versus striking out for one's self, the speaker, having equated following the practice of the best Ancients with following Nature, first cautions the young writer to

Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem.³

But instantly, lest this should lead to extreme servility, he advises the poet:

³ *Essay on Criticism*, I, 139.

From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.⁴

Then, fearful that this, too, might encourage extremism, he qualifies it with:

But though the Ancients thus their rules invade,
(As kings dispense with laws themselves have made)

Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its End;
Let it be seldom and compelled by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.⁵

Or consider the speaker's discussion of the golden mean with regard to obscenity in literature. In Part II of the *Essay* we are advised for thirty lines (526-55) that the salacious writer should find no pardon. But, lest he seem excessively puritanical, the speaker then indicates that there is a *via media* in this matter too:

Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice;
All seems infected that th'infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.⁶

Not only the overt logical texture of the poem but such factors as diction, metaphor, syntax, and even rhyme are used to bolster the *via media* theme and the speaker's status as an exponent of it. To take one example from the use of metaphor, it was important, if the speaker's critical dicta were to carry authority, that he should appear to be a man of the world and aware, as the enlightened Augustan usually was, of the interpenetration of different realms of value and the undesirability of excluding any realm pertinent to human problems. The speaker therefore draws a conspicuous number of analogies from various aspects of the life of "the Town," as, for example:

⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 152-53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 161-68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 556-59.

So modern 'Potheccaries, taught the art,
By Doctor's bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.⁷

Or from an unaesthetic aspect of physiology:

Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.⁸

It seems evident, then, that the device of the implied dramatic speaker is used

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 108-11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 388-89.

by Pope significantly and functionally in the major poems here briefly examined. Though the use varied with the theme and approach adopted for a particular poem, it always conduces to greater dramatic objectivity and greater dramatic tension and, moreover, enlarges the possibilities of compression in ideas and phrasing, thus contributing toward that epigrammatism which is so salient a feature of Pope's style.

E. A. Robinson's Symphony: "The Man Who Died Twice"

RICHARD CROWDER¹

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON is known to college students chiefly through a few of the shorter poems generally found in anthologies. Excellent as "Richard Cory," "Miniver Cheevy," and "Mr. Flood's Party" may be, they do not give a full sampling of Robinson. Even if the student reads "The Man against the Sky" and "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford," the longest of the customarily anthologized selections, he is not given a fair chance at the long narrative, which was the form to which Robinson devoted most of the last twenty years of his life (from *Merlin* in 1917 to *King Jasper* in 1935). Granted that *Roman Bartholow* and *Talifer* and others of the long poems are inferior, still the genre should not be ignored categorically. College students should be given an opportunity to study this part of Robinson's work in order to see him whole as a con-

tributor of great importance to the corpus of American literature.

A number of distinguished poet-critics—including Morton Dauwen Zabel, Harriet Monroe, and Marianne Moore—have given unstinted praise to Robinson's *The Man Who Died Twice*. Miss Monroe actually rated it "the best one of all," and for Mr. Zabel it was the only one of the longer poems to rank with the work of Robinson's "greatest strength."

Various qualities of this poem would make it of interest to students of literature—in a general introductory course or in a more specific American literature curriculum. In the first place, it is a poem short enough to let the structure be comprehended without confusion, and yet it is not so short that the reader is unable to get the feel of body in it: there is ample room for the development of a moral theme. Furthermore, there are flashings

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of metaphor and turns of phrase which the slow dignity of most of the lines might apparently deny but which are all the more brilliant for their reticent setting. This poem is a clear example of the inseparable quality of the form and the meaning: here the aesthetic and the ethical are one. The poem divides itself easily into an introduction and conclusion and four main parts, which are each characterized by a certain definable mood. For these reasons *The Man Who Died Twice* would seem to recommend itself to classroom study.

The first seventy-three lines of the poem constitute an introduction the principal theme of which is Fernando Nash's reverberating declaration, "I had it once!" (He is speaking of his undeniable musical genius.) This theme recurs again and again throughout the poem, tying together the several sections into an artistic whole. The unassuming, ironically casual tempo of this introductory section is suggested by the very first two lines:

If I had not walked aimlessly up town
That evening, and as aimlessly walked back. . . .

The first of the four major divisions, lines 74-626, is in the minor key of self-reproach. It is paced by the long, vituperative passages in which Nash berates himself for giving way before he had written the symphony the inspiration for which he knows he had—once. Though to some critics these passages may seem overdone, they do have the salutary effect of a volley of oaths. In this section is reintroduced the theme presented in the introduction: "I had it—once!" But the principal idea consists of the rapid, imaginative self-censure burning against the temperate background of the narrator's more or less objective comment.

Here are suggested motifs developed at greater length in later sections:

Blown down by choral horns out of a star . . .

You're not even a rat;

For a good rat will wait for what is coming,
Whether it comes or not. You could not wait,
Knowing that it must come. You had it—once.

The second section, lines 627-798, is in a different spirit from the first. In macabre mood, its principal subject is the vision of the rat orchestra, playing its weird, firm music before the grave, not unkindly picture of Bach. These "orchestral rats" serve to introduce to Nash a growing clarity which is to culminate in the last section—a clarity of inspiration breaking through the years of mediocrity and proving that he "had it—once."

The third section, lines 798-942, is a play on three themes: the elusive melodies, the peace that has come at last with the clarity of Nash's mind, and the contrasted fear of, yet longing for, death, which might overtake him before he fully realizes the product of his incipient inspiration. The arrangement and recurrence of the themes is indicative of the undulatory movement of Nash's thought as he lies on his bed starving between the episode of the rat symphony and the glorious experience of the "choral gold" of his long-sought composition.

The general spirit of the final section, lines 943-1077, is that of exhilaration arising from the inspiration that has at last welled up in him. This section presents an entire symphony in miniature, a symphony divided into four movements. Mabel Daniels, the composer, has reported that Robinson once marked the various passages of this little symphony in her copy of the poem, seeming surprised that the structure was not obvious to every reader.

The first movement is characterized

by "Joy, like an infinite wine"; but a note of weariness, sounded by

A lean and slinking mute with a bassoon,
makes its entrance unnoticed until the joyful mood quiets down for a moment. After this secondary theme, the first returns, all the more important in the face of the doom predicted by the bassoon. Toward the end of the movement a cacophonous sound of drums and of a "horde of demons" routs the first theme. These drums recur in the other movements, mindful of the common fate of death. One sees what the critics mean when they say this symphony is an allegory of the struggle between good and evil. And the allegory becomes even clearer as the poem proceeds.

The second movement is chiefly a solo melody which rises

slowly to the stars
Carrying all the sorrow of man with it . . .

As the sound falls again, the drums of death end the movement.

The third movement is a "frantic bacchanale" of the dead who mistake "hell for paradise." These are some of Robinson's "children of the night," poor souls afraid to face the truth about themselves (a theme treated in many other Robinson poems, such as *Amaranth*). They are silenced at the end by "avenging trumpets" of God. And in the silence come the persistent drums,

which, played by Death
Himself, were beating sullenly alone.

The last movement is the "marching hymn" of those who are returning to clarity from frustration. They have found their way back from "the valley of the shadow" (a favorite phrase with Robinson). They have dared to know themselves for what they really are.

Here the poem ends, except for a long conclusion, a repetition of the introduction: "I had it—once." Its theme is that of resignation:

All we know about the world
For certain is that it appears to be.

And in the denouement, the long-sustained final chord, there is a pleasurable, cathartic peace as the narrator sinks the protagonist's "ashes in the sea."

The Man Who Died Twice, when it appeared early in 1924, did not make a great impression; in itself it probably did not have much influence on the poetry of the late 1920's and the 1930's; its author stemmed from the nineteenth century; its verse form was not startling. It was, however, the product of a poet with the solidity of tradition behind him—not just the tradition of the Victorian age out of which he came but the tradition of the Greeks. (Here was none of the imitation of the ancients that characterized the eighteenth century but the true classical imitation—the ideal imitation of life.) It was marked by action—not only outward event but also psychical activity; it displayed the "pathetic"—a flux of feelings, moods, and sensations; but above all it was a piece of great ethical import: man is responsible for the salvation of his own soul, and he is lost without strength of character.

This emphasis on self-reliance is to be found throughout Robinson's poetry. Even from the grave the poet taught this lesson: at the conclusion of the posthumous *King Jasper*, Zoë leaves the destroyed palace of her husband's materialist father—alone. Nash's tragedy lies in his realization of this law of salvation and his failure to obey. His tragic flaw is impatience.

The Man Who Died Twice did not re-

ceive immediate acclaim, neither was it neglected by discriminating reviewers. It did not have the historical honor accorded to *The Man against the Sky* (1916) of calling unaccustomed public attention to its quiet author; but such a function was no longer necessary: readers of poetry had come to expect work of merit from the pen of Robinson. Neither did this poem attain the popularity which *Tristram* (1927) was to achieve. Among the discerning, however, popularity is a dubious honor. Despite its modest reception it was awarded the distinction of the Pu-

litzer Prize for 1925. What the poem did have was universality, organic form, musicality of a cerebral sort, imaginative depth, and a superb dignity coupled with a profound sense of humor. As one of the strongest, most powerfully moving achievements of one of America's major poets, *The Man Who Died Twice* deserves the renewed attention not only of the scholar but also of the general reader. And one of the most influential places for the reintroduction of this poem is the college classroom, where the tastes of the "general reader" can be formed.

On the Relevancy of Dragons and Teaching

EARL DANIELS¹

DRAGONS are old-fashioned!" That is copied on a card and stands on my desk, propped against the inkwell. It comes from a newspaper editorial, and it makes me wonder whenever I read it. The writer probably meant that there are no dragons any more—no nocuous beasts to be encountered and slain by the knight who has kept all-night altar-vigil with his armor, to be readied for the quest; no Apollyon for the Pilgrim's battle. Then, there are no St. Georges either; or, if there be, occupation has failed. This leads naturally to searching, provocative question: What, then, is left for a man to do for living—for *living*, for *life*, mind you, and not the *making of a living* merely? Perhaps something like that is our special question, indicative of the special dilemma of our generation.

I like to think, at this point, of a boy met on a country road, in quiet splendor of summer twilight afterglow, a few days

since. He was not impressive at first: he was wearing very baggy, ill-fitting khaki trousers, which might have been heritage from some older brother; his faded flannel shirt was dirty, and there was a ragged, unmended hole in one elbow; his square-toed shoes, once, in better days, on military duty, were scuffed and dusty; he slouched when he walked, his shoulders were drooped, his head down. As he came up to me, he stopped, brushed a mop of hair out of his tired eyes with a country boy's awkward, overgrown hand, and inquired the way to Brookfield. That was all. When I had told him as best I could, he set off again on his way into the gathering dark. But a light I could not forget was in those eyes, making him appear a kind of epitome of American boys, of boys everywhere when boys are as boys ought to be, unspoiled, uncontaminated by disillusion, before they have known the Fall. Illumination of the quest was there; purpose to go somewhere, as over against going only;

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imagination was still lamp for the feet of his spirit.

I thought of Telemachus seeking his father. I thought of Arthur and his knights, even of Don Quixote—and of St. George. I knew dragons were not old-fashioned, really, but immortal, like life itself, as necessary to life as life.

This boy brings me naturally to another and different group of American boys. They were college men, some half-dozen, already in sight of graduation, gathered around a fire, talking. I was listener only, but listening taught me much I had not known before, and not a little was disillusioning and bitter. The conversation was about interviews with potential employers and about opportunities for the future. I heard much of size and far-flung dominions of this and that corporation, of influence and power; of rapidity in advance and being promptly put over other men as boss, only they said "supervisor"; very much of pay at the start, with certainties of ten, fifteen, and twenty thousand dollars assured income in next to no time. But I heard, that entire evening, not one word of a man's fitness for the business which he planned on entering, of the challenge of work well done for joy of working; not one word of opportunity to grow as a man through work; nor anything remotely resembling a conception of service to a man's fellow-creatures. Judging by what they said, they were all hard-boiled materialists, on the weary country of whose imaginations no shadow of a rock had fallen. Impossible to avoid melancholy conviction that for these soon-to-be-college-graduates, who, we are told, are the hope of the world, even an elementary notion of idealism was as foreign to their thinking as are the characters of the Greek alphabet, beyond what they need to read the signatures

over the doorways of the college fraternity houses. Greek may have been one of many important things missed somewhere along the way in their feverish, frequently faculty-stimulated, pursuit of the personal and the immediate—gross heresy of the personal, shameless cult of what must be no farther away than the length of one's nose!

To the group around the fire, to the seniors, I would summon now another student, a freshman this time, with his highly serious freshman theme inevitably comparing college graduate with that unfortunate other who stopped his education with high school. Naturally, the first was success; the other not. Full measure of that success was in the college man's earning twenty thousand dollars shortly after graduation, with no visible maximum in sight; whereas the high-school student was left far behind him in income—a few paltry thousands—and could, at best, look forward to a meager five- or six-thousand-dollar maximum.

Still another student shall be remembered here, one with brains he knew how to use, with talent and promise. About the middle of his college course he shifted from a major in English to a major in philosophy. I asked him why. "I'll tell you," he said. "People in English don't seem to have convictions. You don't get down to the fundamental questions I have to have answered. Things don't go together, and there isn't any pattern. I'm not sure you know what you're teaching, or why." I let it go at that, because I recognized how too often his strictures were justified. I said nothing about whether modern philosophy does or does not get down to fundamentals, raising essential questions which it answers.

By contrast with seniors around the fire, and freshman with his theme, both equipped with only mechanical, material

tests and measures of human success, and by contrast with the man who went over from English literature to philosophy, all of them, somewhere, spoiled, contaminated, and despiritualized, I like to turn back to the boy inquiring about Brookfield—to remember him with joy.

And somehow, thinking on the others, it is as though I hear sound of twisting, heaving underground, protesting restlessness, within their graves, of the great poets of all the ages. For if one thing be more than others true about poets who truly are poets, it is just that their lives are so largely given to witnessing a central truth we are in danger, now, of losing sight of, to our cost, to our spiritual death, even. When we have learned how and care to listen, poets have always told us man is more than matter, being spirit as well, linked for life with a source of spiritual energy, some great central core of reality; he must be anchored in a primal assurance and an everlasting "Yea." Antaeus-like, he derives strength from contact.

That is why Telemachus seeks a father, whether the Telemachus be of Homer or Joyce, for the theme is one, though details of pilgrimage may seem as variant as the range between nobility and corruption. That is why Aeneas must find out a new fatherland; why Adam and Eve, unparadised, reparaedised afterward through contact renewed with the origin of their natures, leave the Garden at the triumphal end of Milton's poem with hope, hand in hand, and "the world is all before them." It is why Manoa proclaims victory for Samson, in his death stronger than ever he had been in life.

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast

because Samson has been brought

Home to his Father's house.

That the words "Father's house" signify the allegorical beyond the literal needs only the most elementary, thoughtful reading of Milton to discover.

The word, which is the poets' message and universal proclaiming—intention become flesh—is more than an ancient word, spoken for ancients, by ancients. It may be heard in the conclusion of W. H. Auden's poem:

For the others, like me, there is only the flash
Of negative knowledge, the night when,
drunk, one
Staggers to the bathroom and stares in the
glass
To meet one's madness. . . .

Negative knowledge only, if I read Mr. Auden right, is because we modern men are

Wanting our own way, unwilling to say Yes
To the Self-So which is the same at all times,
That Always-Opposite which is the whole
subject
Of our not-knowing. . . .

And the definitive statement is, as definitive statements have a habit of being in contemporary literature, with Mr. Eliot:

Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks. . . .

Suffer me not to be separated.

Antaeus must return to his earth! Telemachus must find and claim his father!

But what has all this—dragons, boy inquiring the way to Brookfield, the college students I have enumerated, and the poets from Homer and Virgil to Auden and Eliot—what has this to do with those of us who venture to teach literature? *De nobis fabula!*

I believe it is later than we think, high time, indeed, for our trying to do something about dragons, about a restoration of belief in their timelessness. If the day

has come when the eloquence and conviction of a Wordsworthian mystic experience, at daybreak, by the shores of an English lake, can be summarily dismissed by the empty cynicism of stupid assertion: "What difference does it make whether you get it that way or with coke and aspirin?" then it is more than high time something were done. Unless, of course, we are ourselves convicted of materialism, being convinced no convictions are worth having beyond the conviction of no conviction; sure that, instead of all things happening for the best in the best of all possible worlds, we are but denizens of a planet whose only order is that one thing happens after another in uncaused, irrational succession. Those two doctrines, one earlier in time being fruit of superficial piety, the other and later, of self-conscious, equally superficial disillusion, seem equally nugatory, offering little for preference between them.

English is not working today. That is my plain and simple contention. It is not working to anything like the significant extent it should be; not working in any vital way. Otherwise, college graduates would think of their work in terms of something else besides salary; for success, they would have other measuring rods, which we should at least have helped to provide. It is not working, or capable men would not feel compulsion for change to philosophy, and it is not working because more of our graduates than do do not continue, beyond college, reading which is more or other than mere and time-filling pastime. We are becoming a refuge for dilettantes who, the tongue being after a fashion part of their heritage, turn to us for relatively effortless, more or less natural way to a diploma. They are not deluded, and we should not be either. English is not working today, in a word, because it has been separated.

We who teach have been separated. Out of our own ineffectual separatedness we are trying to teach others, many of whom, through no fault which is theirs or ours, were separated long before they came to us, whose separation then we do nothing to cure, confirming it rather by the contagion of our own isolation. When blind try to lead blind, the single, old-fashioned phenomenon of the pit is still inescapable. Displaced persons are pitiable enough wherever found; we know that as an aftermath of war from even casual perusal of newspapers. But what is to be said about those who have been displaced from the country of their spirit, for whom dream and vision have perished, dragons become as though they had never been—about this most shameless and destructive dispossession?

Let's not take refuge in talk about values we do not possess, for values are not basically mysterious, being both communicable and contagious. Let's stop drawing a false cloak of superiority and pretension about ourselves by beginning with deprecation of students for their lack of a sense of values. After all, if they had values already, there would be small occasion for us. The fact of the stream's not rising higher than its source is one reason for our existence, to do something about the source, as to both location and quality. We ought first to scrutinize our own standards and values; we may be in for surprises; we may even perceive how far an ancient beating of the breast and an ancient *mea culpa* is right and appropriate for us, as gesture and as cry—for us, here and now.

Not that by any means the fault lies entirely at our door. The disease is too complex for so simple diagnosis and cure. But it does seem we might well do something, honestly, and without blinking, to recognize our own part in great and gen-

eral responsibility. Our share in this general situation might be better, more emphatically realized, perhaps, were we at once to cease from trying to be general assistants to every possible subject in an educational curriculum, our fingers in everyone's business. Then we might again return to our own fundamental, essential business, which is the teaching of literature, with understanding, with enthusiasm, with, above all, conviction. Is it too much to ask for an act of faith from our craft?

In any event, what I should ask for now is that children be no longer cheated of their human heritage of imagination and the things of the spirit, of their right to dragons and to doing battle with them. The need is for *convictions*.

We are in want of that first great conviction of all—that literature matters, and matters supremely, above and beyond most other things. I mean matters as an end in itself, not simply as a tool subject, means and adjunct to something inherently lesser; like, for example, that mysterious “communications,” discussed today with almost bated breath. Some of us think we recognize it as one more shabby substitution, destined, once out of fashion—in which it differs from dragons—to go the way of predecessors like “correlation,” “the socialized recitation,” and many more. We are in want of conviction within ourselves. Literature has failed to get down inside us, to do with us an all-important something, making us over in the fashion of itself. Hence, it remains a corpus for all sorts of impertinent investigation, aimed at very sorry exhibition of desiccated, dead, largely irrelevant facts, which may be an administrator's inducement to academic promotion. We may, with reason, argue about equations of Truth and Beauty; but, as someone has well said, whatever

we may think on this point, we ought not to make base and baseless confusion between Truth as Beauty and Truth as mere Information.

How much do we read for ourselves, in leisure hours, on our own time, for our own pleasure and satisfaction, the literature we presume to try and teach? And how much do we turn to it solely in official preparation for our teaching? Shakespeare and Spenser will not speak to that second kind of attention, if the off and independent hours be fed, by preference, with book-of-the-month-club selections, digests, and the latest production of tawdry Hollywood sensationalism. For we do teach out of what we are, not out of what we posture, behind a desk, as being; and what we are may largely be measured by what we read and what we do, by what our students read and do also. We have, ourselves, to believe in dragons first.

We are also in want of very much conviction as to how much it matters what students read so long as they read. We pamper existent taste for best sellers. We talk about starting at their own level, with something written in their own lingo, which will have the immediate and the natural appeal. Basically, that is a plea of our own indolence, wanting to make it easy for ourselves. I have heard it seriously contended that college men should not be asked, today, to read Francis Bacon, because he is out of touch with their own thought and is too difficult. So much the better for Bacon, since we talk, in season and out, of the importance of the new and different approach. Is there better way for muscles to grow than by being given opportunity to exercise on difficulty? I should suppose a student very appropriately might be offered some things not phrased in his own short-hand jargon; that he had a right to ex-

pect some things not there before would, in the course of his college years, be put into his head. And I must confess to remaining quite irreconciled to any notion that one who has been bred on the wisdom of the Renaissance mind of Francis Bacon, or come to grips with the agony of the Greek tragedy, however difficult, foreign, and involved, is not better off, from the point of view of simple literacy, than he who has been taught ethic from a contemporary fictionist, one who can blatantly assert, "I don't know much about it." (He didn't need to tell us that, really!) "All I know is that what I like to do is right and what I don't like to do is bad."

As often as not, the student is told there is something fine and courageous in this or a similar contemporary statement; the modern, forsooth, is in revolt against convention; he is declaring for individual freedom, revealing unconventional, and so important, profound truth and significance in his work. Can thinking ever be shoddier than that? It is the common confusion between what Babbitt of Harvard used to call being emancipated and merely unbuttoned. For much of the so-called truth-to-life, the vital realism, becomes, to analysis, little more than defense, in high-flown, academic phrases, of license, promiscuity, perversion, adultery, and other gross evils, the life of sensation and not the life of thought, human decency, and respectability.

John Donne once wrote a poem in which occur lines almost as fine, when understood, as almost anything I know in literature:

Thy firmness draws my circle just,
And makes me end, where I begunne.

That is nobler than song about a candle being burned at both ends so that it will

not last the night. I think it makes a difference whether students get one kind of poetry or the other, John Donne or the contemporary lyricist; how they are taught to approach it and read it.

And I think it matters too whether through literature they are taught responsibility or irresponsibility. A contemporary columnist discussing the current state of fiction writes: "The practical content of a rational education of a human being consists in learning that whatever he does he must take the consequences." Agreed! Which is why I believe we do our students disservice, are less to them than we should be, if for the sake of froth, glitter, and the excitement of the immediate appeal we fail to saturate them, difficult though they may be, in novelists of responsibility rather than irresponsibility, novelists like Henry James or Joseph Conrad rather than those contemporary others who shall be spared the invidiousness of comparison here. For the men and women of James and Conrad, and of many other honest practitioners of the craft of fiction, understand this law of the consequence and the futility of evasion. I like Conrad's words, in the famous "Preface" to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, for they bring Truth and Beauty into a fellowship, when they have long been sundered, and, though written from the writer's point of view, they belong equally in the manual of anyone who would teach literature.

A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colours, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in the facts of life what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and

convincing quality—the very truth of their existence. . . .

To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving and the fortunate, even that task is accomplished. And when it is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest.

The columnist who spoke up for responsibility concluded, a few sentences farther on, her review of the novel's state with a common-sense question which ought to have relevancy for every teacher of literature. "Now, couldn't we," she said, "have a few novels about intelligent people for a change?" I think, for a change, we ought to have a responsibility, which ought to be sprung of conviction, for placing before students books by and about intelligent people—for a change. If Jane Austen be out of fashion, perhaps we ought to have a change in fashion, and about that we surely can do something; so that another generation may not miss the acuity of her rich human understanding and wisdom. A few more Janeites might be a very good thing for the world! That our students do not read Virginia Woolf is the best reason I can think of for introducing them to *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Certainly I should prescribe for them, and prescribe with a vengeance, heartily sick, as I am, when it comes to courses or the contents of courses, with so much talk about what they would like or what they want. If there is to be any education, they must be given what is good for them, what they ought to have, and liking is minor consideration at best. If

teachers, within reasonable limits, don't recognize that good which is morally obligatory, this is about the most shameless denial I know of the validity of what we like to call education. If each generation must start fresh and from scratch, must learn everything on its own, from experience, taking nothing on authority, then we turn our backs on civilization, on experience and the fruit of experience, and we might as well close and padlock doors of colleges and universities.

Certainly, too, I should stop suggesting we ought to read this because it is American, rather than that which is British—the popular argument of very provincial chauvinism, flourishing with bay-tree luxuriance even in the popular climate of talk about one world. I shouldn't choose this because it is new, over the other which is old. Matthew Arnold, long ago, disposed of the argument about age in relation to noble subject matter. It might even be that exposure, through literature, to certain aspects of medieval culture, deep, saturating exposure, might prove to be one of the most valuable experiences a college student could have, provided we want him to understand, truly to understand, this life he is going to be compelled to live, his own generation; provided we are at all anxious about human adjustment to life, and not crass, slavish surrender. I should abandon these and other too numerous, wholly extraneous, reasons offered for what we prefer to teach. I should come back to literature *qua* literature. That is probably the chief heresy in all I am writing.

Our responsibility is simple and ancient, and it should not change. Matthew Arnold was right about the best that has been known and thought in the world, about the consequent currents of fresh ideas, from which literature grows. We have to give students the best there

is. That matters most of all. Difficulty in the reading is part of our special job of interpretation, what we are here for. Because they read, if at all, only the latest best sellers is our reason for compelling them to contact with books of substance and power. We must ourselves know the best; we must have convictions about it.

If we can regain conviction, though I am not too much concerned about the validity of miracle, I am yet optimist enough to believe much will follow. Among other consequences of our re-birth, not the least will be that the teaching of literature may once more become important, influential in the life of the community, as it has not, I am convinced, for a long time been. It's a pity when a bright boy turns from English because we don't ask right questions. But it's small good asking questions unless there are answers, and answers can rise only out of conviction. Naturally we are going to be propagandists, but that's what all poets worthy of the name have been, bent on finding out and reporting on Beauty which is Truth and Truth which is Beauty, on the eternal One at the still heart of flux.

To quote Browning with an application other than he intended:

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure, though seldom are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from the false ones. . . .

There *are* flashes struck from midnights!
Well if we know them, for sharing with
those who come to be taught.

I'd like students, with us, to look on stars: on Meredith's "army of unalterable law" and on those of Keats, which are still "the same bright, patient stars" they were when Hyperion turned his eyes toward them and learned so much he had not known before.

I'd like students to read the book which was not written, as Wallace Stevens calls it:

A young man seated at his table
Holds in his hand a book you have never
written
Staring at the secretions of the words as
They reveal themselves.

Words do have secretions, to be extracted by double distillation of intelligence and imagination. But if students are to read the unwritten book, we too must have read it before them, or must read it with them.

Thoreau records how he "frequently tramped eight or ten miles through deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech-tree, or a yellow-birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines." This is the same Thoreau who, in the same *Walden*, challenged the reader: "Read my book, if you dare." I'd like students to keep appointments with beech trees, for then they will have courage to read. But if they are to do so, we must also recognize the high necessity of engagements with trees, even at the cost of a long walk through inclement weather.

About the year 500, when he was probably about the age of an average college graduate today, a member of a prosperous and cultivated Italian family, later to become illustrious as St. Benedict, withdrew from the world to the solitude of a cave, some thirty miles from Rome, for meditation, desiring, as his biographer, St. Gregory, writes, "to please God alone." Out of this desire were evolved the Benedictine Order and the great Benedictine Rule, model for almost all monastic disciplines which have developed since. "Let nothing," Benedict wrote, in the forty-third chapter of his Rule, "let nothing be placed before the work of God." *Nihil operi Dei praeponatur!*

I am far from suggesting a return to the practices of St. Benedict, or of any of those other heroic figures of the Middle Ages. Practices are one thing, the ideals from which practices spring are another. Practices pass with the age of which they are part, and only stupid idolizing *tempus actum* would attempt to revive them in foreign soil, in later time. But ideals, when valid, remain, heritage and property of all time. So, I am venturing to suggest, for the sake of dragons and so much else, that St. Benedict's resonant Latin phrase might well become ideal and

inspiration, now, for those who dare to read books and so to teach literature. *Nihil operi Dei praeponatur!*

There is a second card on my desk, propped against the inkwell, under the card about the dragons now. I think it ought to be brought out on top again. This second card reads: "*Discere scilicet quasi semper victurus; vivere quasi cras moriturus.*"

For a point of view like that, dragons will always be the fashion. There will always be the boy who is inquiring the way to Brookfield.

An Investigation into Comparable Results Obtained from Two Methods of Increasing Reading Speed among Adults

NORMAN LEWIS¹

IN LATE 1943 the author met his first group of adult students who wished to improve their reading speed. These were all mature people, none of whom was at the time attending school. Several of these adults were college graduates, and the bulk of the class were high-school graduates. In an eight-week course, students and teacher discussed the physiology of the reading process and the psychology of speeding up. During the cycle, students practiced on eye movements and on comprehension and were tested weekly for speed. At the end of the course the majority of the students had shown a 25-50 per cent increase in speed, one student running as high as 100 per cent and

two students showing no improvement at all.

This was the beginning of a continuous series of eight-week classes, three each year. Enrolment increased each cycle, with close to 100 registering for the January, 1948, cycle. In all instances classes were split up so that there were never more than 30 in one group.

Cycle after cycle, the method of teaching the course changed, with the greatest weight being given in the first cycle to improving eye movements and gradually somewhat less and less emphasis being given to eye movements as the cycles continued. With the decrease in emphasis on eye movements, there was a proportionate increase in emphasis on comprehension. In the cycle which started in January, 1948, the author decided to

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conduct an investigation which might show with some reliability which of the two techniques he was using—improvement of eye movements and improvement of comprehension—had the greater effect in producing the results that his students were showing.

All students who registered for the January, 1948, class were given a speed and comprehension test at the very beginning of the course. This was a 2,600-word article, "Diet and Die," from a recent issue of *Coronet* magazine. The author then chose 34 students and divided them in such a way that each student had an opposite number in the alternate group. Such division was made solely on the basis of speed in words per minute. The comprehension of all 34 students was quite accurate. Of the 34 students, only 4 made a comprehension score of under 85 per cent; most of the scores were either perfect or in the 90's.

The speed of the 34 students ranged from 217 words per minute to 434 words per minute, as Table 1 will show.

It is thus seen that the largest proportion of students in the two groups were reading at roughly the same speed, with a few purposely selected who read at 300 or more words per minute.

In one group, students trained exclusively to improve their eye movements by means of a number of mechanical techniques which will be described. In the alternate group, on the other hand, no work was done in eye movements—insight into the author's thinking, meaning, and intent; structure of the material; and speed of comprehension were the three factors emphasized.

The classes were set up so that the 17 students in the "eye-movement" group were actually matched with 17 in the "comprehension" group, each student in one group having his exact opposite

number in the other group who had read at the same speed in the original *Coronet* article.

In any adult group it is rare for all the students to finish the entire course, no matter how brief the course may be. For one reason or another a few always drop out before the end of the cycle. In the eye-movement group, 13 of the 17 students finished the course, and in the comprehension group 14 of the 17 finished.

METHODS USED IN THE EYE-MOVEMENT GROUP

The techniques used in the eye-movement group were as follows:

1. Each student was given an ophthalmographic test and the picture of his eye movements was kept on file.

TABLE 1
RATES OF SPEED AT THE BEGIN-
NING OF THE INVESTIGATION

Speed in Words per Minute	No. of Students
217-299.....	24
300-399.....	6
400-434.....	4

2. Twenty-five minutes at the beginning of the hour were devoted to training with the flashmeter. In this training, students attempted to recognize words, digits, and phrases from a start of one-fifth of a second up to one-fiftieth of a second.

3. Fifteen minutes were then devoted to training with the metronoscope.

4. Approximately 20 minutes were then spent on eye-movement exercises on mimeographed sheets. There was practice in spanning blank lines up to 2 inches in length; practice in making fixations on phrases; practice in reading columns varying in length from 1 to 2 inches in one fixation. Students attempted to read approximately 4-inch lines of mate-

rial in 3 fixations. A metronome was used in several of the sessions to help the students in making quick fixations.

5. About 15 minutes were then devoted to having students watch one another's eye movements by means of a mirror or a peephole cut into a 3×5 blank index card.

6. The last 15 minutes of the formal class session were spent by the students in taking the timed test, the students consciously attempting throughout the test to read the selection at 3 fixations per line. At the end of the hour-and-a-half training, those students who had problems in eye-movement training stayed after class for individual consultations with the instructor.

At the end of the eight-week course, another ophthalmographic film was made, and a final speed and comprehension test was administered. This final test was a 2,700-word article, "Vandalism—a National Disgrace," by Madelyn Wood, taken again from an issue of *Coronet* and similar in difficulty and vocabulary to the original speed and comprehension test.

The home assignment for this group was two 15-minute periods a day of practice in eye movements.

The 17 students in this group were given no other outside work, and none of them was taking any other courses; it is therefore reasonable to assume that any improvement in reading speed would come either from the eye training given during the eight class sessions or from the psychological benefit of attending a reading-improvement course.

METHODS USED IN THE COMPREHENSION-IMPROVEMENT GROUP

There was no uniform distribution of training in this group such as there was in the eye-movement group, and, in-

stead of each session duplicating the previous one, all sessions were different. Two general techniques were used: reading of selections of increasing difficulty, with an attempt on the part of the students to increase the speed of comprehension; and thorough discussion and analysis of the ideas and structure of the selection read. No mechanical devices of any sort were used, and no mention was made of eye movements. In the first three sessions, short stories were read, timed, and analyzed. In the fourth, anecdotes were read at top speed. The students attempted in the shortest possible time to get the point. In the fifth session, selected paragraphs, each containing one main idea and a number of subordinate ideas, were read, timed, and analyzed. In the sixth and seventh sessions, magazine articles of approximately 2,500–3,000 words were read, timed, and discussed. In the eighth session, the final session, the 2,700-word article, "Vandalism—a National Disgrace," was administered to the group in the same manner as the same test was administered to the eye-movement group. This class also had sessions of an hour and a half, students staying after class to discuss their comprehension problems individually with the instructor.

Home assignments in this group were heavy. Each student was required to read a full novel each week, keep a note of the time required to finish the book and the number of sittings in which the book was read. Students wrote single-paragraph summaries of the main theme of each book and brought these summaries to class for discussion.

RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Table 2 shows the starting and finishing rates in words per minute of the eye-movement group. Table 3 shows the

starting and finishing rates of the comprehension group.

In the eye-movement group students made an average improvement in speed of 24.7 per cent. Students in the comprehension group made an average improvement in speed of 69.1 per cent. In every instance the member of the comprehension group whose opposite number had not resigned from the eye-movement group showed a significantly higher percentage of improvement than did his opposite number in the eye-movement group.

The students of the comprehension group expressed, in general, a feeling that they were reading with greater comfort, greater understanding, and much greater speed than when they started the course. All were especially delighted with having discovered that they could read a full novel every week in two or three long sittings.

CONCLUSIONS

While only 27 students took part in the experiment—and this is certainly not a large enough number on which to base sweeping conclusions—the author nevertheless feels that mature adults who are not pathologically poor readers can gain the most benefit in a short period of time from a reading course which stresses comprehension, sensitivity to the structure of writing, and constant practice in rapid reading both during class sessions and on the outside; with visual techniques taught collaterally, rather than exclusively. It may be reasoned from the data of the experiment, as well as from results gained in the Reading Clinics of the Air University at Maxwell Field, Alabama, and of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., that visual training has its place in a reading program. How big a place is an important question to be determined.

It is also likely that adults who normally read *Coronet*-type material at a speed of 217–89 words per minute can increase their rate from a *judicious* amount of training in eye movements, instantane-

TABLE 2
GAINS IN SPEED OF EYE-MOVEMENT GROUP*

STUDENT	START OF COURSE		END OF COURSE	
	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension
A.....	237	100	270	95
B.....	400	100	450	100
D.....	289	90	337	80
E.....	237	85	270	75
F.....	217	80	270	70
G.....	260	100	300	100
H.....	231	90	270	80
J.....	434	100	469	100
K.....	325	100	337	80
L.....	237	90	337	70
N.....	237	90	360	70
O.....	306	100	386	100
P.....	289	95	360	85

* Arithmetic average gain of this group: 24.7 per cent.

TABLE 3
GAINS IN SPEED OF COMPREHENSION GROUP*

STUDENT	START OF COURSE		END OF COURSE	
	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension
A.....	237	100	360	100
B.....	400	100	675	100
C.....	325	100	540	100
D.....	289	85	540	100
E.....	237	92	540	90
F.....	217	95	337	95
G.....	260	100	386	100
H.....	237	95	540	100
I.....	217	80	337	90
J.....	434	100	600	100
K.....	325	100	514	100
L.....	237	90	416	100
M.....	237	60	360	80
O.....	306	100	540	100

* Arithmetic average gain of this group: 69.1 per cent.

ous recognition, and other mechanical aspects of the reading process—but this conclusion could be substantiated only in a well-controlled experiment in which a large number of adults took part. (The author is at present conducting such experiments in the Adult Reading Clinic of City College but is not yet prepared to report his findings.) There is no doubt that the use of mechanical devices for the testing and training of eye movements is spectacular—the students in the eye-

movement group showed considerably more excitement in the first two weeks than did those in the comprehension group.

In the author's opinion, one of the biggest questions that remain to be settled is how to apportion time and effort between visual education and such intangibles of comprehension as insight, accuracy, enjoyment, responsiveness, sensitivity to structure, and concentration.

He Gave You Song

(On Reading Gerard Manley Hopkins)

Beyond the elements God gave you sound,
Night-tone in minor key, day-tone too clear.
These made the counter melodies you found,
One ever leaving you, one ever near.
He gave you music that you might renew
The dark and light crescendos of your life
When all the brightness of the days shone through
Night-tinted bars the self built up in strife.

He took from you the years like little shells
Strung shining, tear-drop size on shadowed thread,
Let your five fingers ring five mortal bells
Until they rang small anthems for the dead.
And, last, He gave you song the mind retains
As shells hold chorals when no sound remains.

MAXINE BRINKLEY

CHICAGO

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, ADELINE C. BARTLETT, MARGARET M. BRYANT (chairman)

JAMES B. MCMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

SHOWED AS PAST PARTICIPLE

The use of *showed* as an alternate form of the past participle has an interesting history. In OE the verb (*scēawian*) belonged to the weak conjugation, but, according to the OED:

From early ME the verb has had a strong conjugation (after *Know v.*, etc.) by the side of the original weak conjugation; in the pa. t. this survives only in dialects; but for the pa. pple *shown* is now the usual form; but the older *showed* is still sometimes used in the perfect tenses active (chiefly with material object); but in the passive it is obs. exc. as a deliberate archaism.

In 1933 or 1934 I began to jot down any examples of *showed* used as a past participle which came to my attention during the course of the day's reading. By March, 1937, I had found some in the King James Version of the Bible and one in Dryden's dedication to the *Aeneid*. However, I had only three examples from contemporary English, one of which was taken from Breasted's *The Conquest of Civilization* (1926), another from a book review by C. G. Poore in the *New York Times* (December 22, 1935), and the third from one of the issues of the *English Journal* (in either 1933 or 1934), for which I failed to make an accurate record as to the date.

I then decided to write the editor of Webster's *New International Dictionary* for information concerning the data which were in the dictionary files for this usage. About two weeks later I received a reply, from which I quote in part:

... we have preferred the form *shown* for the past participle, and this preference is supported in contemporary use by our lack of examples in modern literature for the alternative form "*showed*."

* Italics mine.

In his "Dictionary of Modern English Usage," Mr. H. W. Fowler, page 532, states "The past participle is generally *shown*, rarely *showed*." In his "Comprehensive Guide to Good English," G. P. Krapp, under the entry *show, verb*, writes "Past Participle *shown*, sometimes *showed*." In his book "How To Say It," published by Putnam's Sons, 1927, Mr. C. N. Lurie comments as follows:

"Showed or Shown

"In the editorial columns of a newspaper the following sentence appeared: 'Suspicion and abuse have at once showed their heads, even as against the highest dignitaries of the church.'

"Either 'have showed' or 'have shown' is correct, according to good authority. It is difficult to say which is in more common use. Probably persons who pay attention to the matter of speaking and writing correctly say 'have shown,' while the ordinary speaker says 'have showed.' But he must not be accused of error for doing so. . . ."

The citations which we have on hand are of rather ancient date. . . .

I concluded that this information, together with the very scanty data which I had found, scarcely justified the listing of *showed* as an alternate form of the past participle. If listed at all, it should be marked either "rare" or "very rare."

At any rate, I continued on the alert. It seemed incredible that the strong form *shown* would continue to be preferred to the weak, and regular, pattern *showed*. Nevertheless, at the present writing it appears that the weak form is still rarely used in Standard Written English, for since 1937 I have run across no more than ten examples, taken from the following publications:

- 1935: *The Teaching of Literature in the High School*, by Reed Smith
- 1937: *Pedlar's Progress*, by Odell Shepard
- 1938: *Harper's Magazine*, January, "Business

- Finds Its Voice," by S. H. Walker and Paul Sklar
- 1944: *Ideas in America*, by Howard Mumford Jones
- 1946: *Association of American Colleges Bulletin*, March, "We Shall Honor Them," by F. P. Gaines
- The Mining Journal* (Marquette, Michigan), September 24, Walter Lippmann's column
- 1948: *The Contemporary Review* (London), January, "The Competitive Order," by Diana Spearman
- The New York Times*, August 1, editorial
- The Milwaukee Journal*, December 19, editorial
- 1949: *The Trying-out of Moby-Dick*, by Howard Vincent

Thirteen examples, collected over a period of from sixteen to seventeen years, do not constitute sufficient data to justify the listing of *showed* as an alternate form of the past participle. It would seem, therefore, that, unless the staff of the *New International-*

al has collected a pretty good batch of examples since 1937 (at which time it had no examples from contemporary English), and unless some "harmless drudge" other than myself has pertinent data other than that which has been presented in this article, the use of *showed* as a past participle in Standard Written English is still rare. I note that the *American College Dictionary* also lists *showed* as an alternate form. It would be interesting to know what data are in the files of this dictionary.

In conclusion, it is interesting to point out that in my own observations of the present-day speech of the so-called "educated" group and of the speech of that broader group whom Fries calls "those who are carrying on the affairs of the community" strong pressure is being exerted by "showed" upon "shown."

RUSSELL THOMAS

NORTHERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Explanation

Doubtless you wonder at the urgency
With which I press into your continent
Of self that others enter cautiously.
You puzzle, probably, at my intent.

Well—it is that I know how sadly fallow
The prairie stretches, fertile hills will lie
Till Art arrives to bless and plant and harrow;
Besides, I know she passes some land by.

Today you stand at sowing tide; I, reaping.
I want your harvest one of joy, not weeping.

SISTER M. BERNETTA QUINN, O.S.F.

COLLEGE OF ST. TERESA
WINONA, MINNESOTA

Round Table

PRODUCING SHAKESPEARE IN AN ELIZABETHAN SETTING

Although the English professional theater is always seeking new approaches to producing Shakespeare, the one experiment which no one will make is that of presenting the plays in the conditions for which their author wrote them. Shakespeare was not only a poet of genius but also an experienced man of the theater. His genius was in the art of writing poetic drama, and he designed his plays expressly for the theater in which they were first performed: the Globe playhouse was quite different both in shape and in conditions of performance from the theaters of today.

It is true that experiments in Elizabethan production have been made from time to time in England. But no pioneer has accepted, without reservation, all the conditions in which Shakespeare worked; and, in my opinion, until those conditions are uncompromisingly accepted, we cannot see the art of this greatest of poetic dramatists in its truest light.

The opportunity exists now, as never before. This is largely due to the work of a United States scholar, Dr. John Cranford Adams, whose researches have made possible the reconstruction of the Globe playhouse, not as a primitive and limited makeshift, but as a perfect vehicle for the poetic drama. His ground plan gives an idea of one of the main points in which it differed from the conventional modern theater. In this octagonal frame, as broad as it is long and no more than eighty feet in outside diameter, the platform occupies a large part of the total area, and the middle of its front edge is the central point of the whole building.

The intimate contact of actor with audience can be imagined if one thinks of Hamlet soliloquizing at the front of the stage: no

member of his audience is more than forty feet away: Hamlet is in the midst of them and can speak to the heart of each of his hearers. On the other hand, Mark Antony, haranguing a stage mob of some dozen players, sways the whole of the audience as well—nearly two thousand of them, of whom the figures on the platform are but the nearest representatives. A duel here in the midst is like a boxing match in a ring, with supporters cheering on every side. When a battle takes place, as so often at the climax of Shakespeare's plays, the audience, too, take sides. In fact, they are not (as in the modern theater) the detached spectators of a distant scene, but active partisans at the edge of a central group.

A further fact of importance is that the platform—which is the main area of action—is always before the eye, always unchanged in appearance. At the back there are two main doors of entry, and between the two is a curtained inset called the "Study," which can be opened to disclose such solid furniture as is necessary for the action. Permanent features of the stage are the two pillars toward the front of the platform which support the overhanging canopy of "the Heavens"; the big central trap door giving access to "Hell" below; the two doors with bay windows above, looking like the typical front of an Elizabethan townhouse; the "Tarras" (or terrace) overhanging the Study, and behind it another inset on the upper floor, called the "Chamber"; above it again a third inset, for the musicians "hanging in the air."

Think of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in this theater. The stage direction of the contemporary quarto text reads: "Enter, at one door, the King of the Fairies with his train; and at another, the Queen of the Fairies with hers." The poet has prepared us, all through the opening scenes, to expect a wood by night, and Oberon cries, with assurance,

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania." At once we forget the architectural background and recognize the fore-stage pillars as pine trees in the forest. It is the poetry that has created the illusion.

Only by putting the plays back upon this stage can we realize how carefully Shakespeare is at pains to make such transformations for us, how much of his stagecraft is designed for this end.

To recapture Shakespeare's stagecraft, we must reproduce the essentials of his theater—the vast, centrally placed platform, unlocalized except in so far as the poet wishes to define it and never concealed from view; and the steady daylight which likewise can be transformed by the poetry into midnight or dawn or sunset or storm or fog. I would add the suggestion that the use of boy actors for the women's parts will also help to clarify Shakespeare's intention.

The simple belief that Shakespeare knew what he was about, and that therefore his own way is the best way of producing his plays has been the inspiration of a series of productions at Harrow School in the last nine years. The school's Speech Room is a semicircular building, with a seating plan of rising tiers like that of an ancient Greek theater: the diameter of the semicircle is not much more than eighty feet, and, by bridging over the "well" which corresponds to the Greek orchestra, it is possible to erect a platform of the same shape, dimension, and central position as that of the Globe playhouse. In an annual series, begun in 1941, six of the plays—*Twelfth Night*, *Henry the Fifth*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Henry the Fourth: Part I*—have been produced in conditions like those of the old Globe theater.

This year, when *Macbeth* was repeated, the "Tarras" and "Chamber" on the upper level of the Globe were for the first time erected in the Speech Room. The critic of the *Times* (London) allowed to the Harrow productions "a closer approximation to the conditions of Shakespeare's own theatre than has been known since the drama fell under the Puritan displeasure of the Long

Parliament in 1642." The same writer declared that the upper stage was "most effectively used for scenes as diverse as the ante-room to Lady Macbeth's bedchamber, the battlements of Dunsinane, and that strange first meeting place of the Weird Sisters for which no terrene description is assigned; it even enabled the banquetting hall to be furnished with a minstrels gallery. The episodes played upon it, and so a little withdrawn, emphasized by contrast the immediacy and intimacy with which action could proceed upon the broad outer platform, in such a way that the audience, seated all about it, and not separated by a barrier between darkness and limelight, were drawn into personal concern and almost contact with the people of the drama and the elemental forces playing upon their souls. The mere mechanics of the triple stage enabled the action to unfold with a speed and coherence beyond the capacity of the proscenium architecture."

RONALD WATKINS

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FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT WRITING

We teachers of English know how frequently our efforts to develop good writing habits in our students are vitiated by the apparent unconcern of other faculty members. We must therefore rejoice whenever colleagues outside our department openly profess their responsibility for promoting the development of correct and effective expression or whenever they are subjected to administrative exhortation to fulfil their obligations in this regard. A heartening instance that occurred recently at Miami University deserves to be celebrated.

Three years ago a committee was authorized by the faculty of the College of Arts and Science to study means of strengthening the requirements for the A.B. degree. The membership consisted of one man each from the departments of chemistry, geology, history, sociology, German, and English, with Dean William E. Alderman as chairman.

Taking its duties seriously, this group held many unhurried discussions on all aspects of liberal education, studied books and articles on the subject, examined the practices of other institutions, sent questionnaires to alumni, and analyzed the philosophy and the results of Miami's own system of requirements. As was expected, this long deliberation led to recommendations for modifying the number of hours required in certain divisions of the curriculum, most of which were subsequently adopted.

One result, however, was not foreseen and was therefore particularly impressive. Consideration of the aims of liberal education led the committee inevitably to the conclusion that all university graduates should possess "the ability to use the English language with correctness, lucidity, and with at least a modicum of facility" and to the recognition that this goal was often not achieved. What is remarkable is that the cure suggested was not that the freshman composition course be revised or that students be required to take more hours in the English department. Instead, the committee proposed that all members of the faculty be required to demonstrate their respect for competence in written expression by demanding it in all their courses. Its opinion was expressed in strong words:

No college student has any right to ask his college professor to read any test or paper that is not written as well as he can write it. No college professor has any reason for giving more than a tentative mark to any slovenly paper; the permanent mark should be given only after a satisfactory revision. No teacher should be hired or retained who is not always alert to incorrectness, carelessness, and clumsiness in diction. No teacher aware of such shortcomings in his students has any right to assume that he is teaching a subject and not educating a student. No teacher of physical education or mathematics or an-

thropology or what not has any more right to remain ignorant of the ability or the inability of his students to use correct and acceptable English than he has to remain ignorant of their knowledge of the subject matter of his course. No teacher has any right to avoid the responsibility that is his by saying, "But I am not a teacher of English." In part, graduates are judged and hired and advanced and condemned on the basis of their spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, and diction. In all fairness, they must have the assistance of all of their teachers in this regard. The professor of physics, by sharp reproof and helpful assistance, can probably do more for one of his majors than can the red ink of any English instructor. Most earnest students have a way of living up to the expectations of those whom they admire most. The entire faculty ought to be interested in educating the whole man.

This forceful statement was read to the faculty by the dean, and mimeographed copies were distributed. The report made it clear that this was not mere English-department propaganda, but the earnest conviction of the entire committee. It was asserted, indeed, that the geologist had been the member who was most insistent on this point.

The committee, in addition, called upon the faculty to give increased practice in writing by using the essay type of examination, whenever possible, in preference to "objective" tests. It pointed out that students need training in taking the mental initiative, in organizing their ideas, and in conveying these ideas to someone else. Objective tests, declared the report, do not give this training; essay or discussion examinations do and hence are "a more useful and constructive instrument of education."

H. BUNKER WRIGHT

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Report and Summary

WITH PROFESSOR MARGARET M. Bryant as chairman, the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English met in conjunction with sessions of the Modern Language Association at Stanford University on September 7, 1949. Randall V. Mills, University of Oregon, reports to us as follows:

At the meeting the problem of creative-writing courses and programs on the college level were discussed by three teachers from Pacific Coast universities.

Professor Robeson Bailey, director of courses in creative writing at the University of Oregon, urged the importance of sustained exercises in extended forms as a part of classwork and stressed that the novel, for example, presented a good type for such practice. Longer forms give the students practice in extended problems of structure and of characterization and force them to develop persistence and to practice methods. The classwork in the long forms does not lead to finished productions, as the students themselves recognize, but does lead to concentrated practice that reveals latent strengths or weaknesses. Professor Bailey cited results he had had in the course at Oregon, and urged courses in nonfictional writing, for too commonly "creative writing" has come to mean "fiction." The problems of nonfiction are those of fiction as well, and the students can recognize that some problems are common to all forms, that skills and qualities requisite to historical narrative are the same as those requisite to fiction or essay. Professor Bailey called for courses permitting extensive and sustained practice in longer forms, not only in fiction but in biography and historical narrative.

Professor Wallace Stegner of Stanford University stressed the value of writing courses on both graduate and undergraduate levels but warned that a fad for them

was growing and that they were tending to be overemphasized at the expense of a proper relationship with the rest of the general curriculum. Such courses, moreover, were frequently taught with the mistaken idea that the methods of historical and critical studies were applicable to problems of creative writing. A course in writing is not a course in a particular subject matter but a chance for experiment, for practice, for expression. It requires not memory for devices but capacity for sympathetic guidance and criticism, whereby the student expressing his ideas is aided by a teacher who has experience as both a scholar and a writer. Writing courses do not develop ideas; ideas must be there first—the course is only a guided opportunity for their expression.

Professor James D. Caldwell of the University of California urged the importance of permitting students a range of emotional expression, an opportunity found in writing courses, especially those emphasizing verse-writing. Too frequently college courses confine the students to methods of formal reason; they have no chance to express their emotions, their feelings, to reach a balanced relationship with the world around them. Their minds are trained in college, but their spirits are allowed to shift for themselves. Creative-writing courses, especially those in poetry, permit students to let their emotions reach an adjustment with the physical world around them. Through poetry, the students can interpret that world by individual symbols; they can find and express significance in what they observe and can let their spirits adjust themselves to problems they must face in life.

THE FALL ISSUE OF THE *AMERICAN Quarterly* contains a useful essay by Henry W. Wells on "The Usable Past in Poetry." He points out that one of the reasons for the

chasm between the general public and the contemporary poet is the fact that the rapid movement of industrial civilization has swept us away from our artistic heritage so fast that the works of creative artists leaning most heavily on the past leave the general public untouched because they know so little about it. Thus artists and scholars have tended to form an elite. Actually the esoteric character of the most praised modern poetry, he says, is in great part owing to its roots in a dim past. He then goes on to show how a poet can put himself in debt to his predecessors, using as illustration poets first of the Renaissance and then of each of the succeeding periods. When he gets to the moderns, one pungent observation follows quickly upon another. He observes that whether one admires Eliot's brilliant manner of making poetry "into a universal vegetable soup, a fluid to contain all previous poets deemed of importance" is a matter of taste, but Eliot has certainly made it attractive only to an elite class of readers. Of Karl Shapiro he says: "His education hangs about him like an academic robe—on some occasions itself a grace, on others causing him to twitch and scratch. Maturity should remedy this." In the end he concludes that we must cherish our traditions yet not be mastered by them.

THE TIGER'S EYE, NOW ENTERING its third year of publication, is continuing its efforts to establish rapport between creative writers and artists and the general public. Its editors believe that the "public" is "much more intelligent than recent intellectual snobs and tight minded critics have wished it to be" and that the "little magazine" is vital only so long as it is a center of creativity and serves somewhat like the old English "pub," as "a gathering place of ideas and behind the scene discussions, in an atmosphere of aesthetic friendliness." Its purpose is to help to get on with the development of art and literature. Thus it is hospitable to new poems, stories, and critical essays on both literature and art and includes in each of its quarterly issues some twenty

illustrations, both in color and in black and white, of the work of contemporary artists. One of its most useful departments is "The Poetry Bulletin" which contains brief critical reviews of new volumes of verse. The summer issue, for example, contains five pages of such reviews, including, among the fifty volumes discussed, the poetry of Canada, England, and Belgium, as well as that of the United States. Address: The Tiger's Eye Publishing Company, 374 Bleecker Street, New York 14. Subscription, \$3.75 a year; single copies, \$1.00.

"STATION WAGON COLLEGE," BY Robert M. Yoder in the *Saturday Evening Post* (October 8), is a lively account of how three colleges are solving the problem of "not enough teachers, not enough courses." They are Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore, which have been sharing professors for eight years under an "easy fitting federation" of "joint appointments." Bryn Mawr and Haverford, for example, share a teacher in drama. He is a Bryn Mawr faculty member, but he gives a course in theater arts for Haverford. Neither Haverford nor Bryn Mawr could afford a full-time man to train and lead the college orchestra. But they could share one, and did. Now the two have combined their orchestras, and Haverford men take the male roles in Bryn Mawr plays. The two colleges maintain a joint flying club and a joint literary magazine. The system involves "circuit riding teachers, commuting students and two- and three-way partnerships in getting what none of the three could afford alone." So successful has the "federation" proved that recently when the three colleges presented a joint program to the Carnegie Corporation they received a grant of \$105,000. This was for an expanded program of Russian studies, which gets under way this fall. "A historian in each college will offer a course in Russian history. Two portable professors, appointed jointly so that they are on the faculties of all three, will teach Russian language and literature. A third joint appointee will teach Russian political institutions." Thus, by the

combined use of six teachers the three small colleges achieve what none could afford alone.

WINNER OF THE 1949 MODERN LANGUAGE Association-Macmillan award is Kenneth Neill Cameron, associate professor of English at Indiana University. His prize-winning manuscript, *The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical*, will be published soon by the Macmillan Company. Professor Cameron is one of the advisers to *College English*. Manuscripts for the 1950 MLA award must reach the MLA secretary before April 1, 1950.

TOMORROW MAGAZINE IS CONDUCTING a college writers' short-story contest which closes January 15, 1950. It is open to anyone taking at least one course in any college in the United States, including adult-education students. Prizes are \$500, \$300, and \$200. Application blanks are not necessary. Manuscripts are not to exceed five thousand words. Address: College Contest, 11 East Forty-fourth Street, New York 17.

FIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS OF Grand Prairie, Texas, were notified last April that they would not be re-employed this fall, apparently because they had indicated to certain citizens in the community their choice of candidates in a school-board election. At the request of the Texas Teachers Association, the NEA's Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education conducted an investigation. It has now issued a report in which it denounces "political thought control" exercised by school boards over members of the teaching staffs. The Commission maintains that teachers have the right—if not the obligation—to participate in public affairs without fear of reprisal. However, it is only when adequate tenure laws are in effect that political control of the schoolteacher will be eliminated. At present, more than one-half of the nation's nine hundred thousand public school teachers, according to Benjamin Fine of the *New York Times*, do not have tenure and

can be dismissed without explanation by local school boards.

In many small colleges and universities teachers are similarly lacking the protection of an effective tenure system. This is especially true for young instructors, who frequently find that the premium for professional advancement is keeping their mouths shut about important and provocative matters. This no doubt is one reason for the tendency of which we are often accused of spending too much time on the esoteric. It certainly is not a situation conducive to the creation of the kind of university and college which Quincy Wright envisages as necessary if the world is to solve its two great problems, war and poverty.

Writing in the October *Journal of Higher Education* on "The Citizen's Stake in Academic Freedom," Wright observes that when a university has academic freedom it can in fact be a microcosm of the world, where its students can become aware of all the complex and varied conditions of the world. Such awareness, however, the student cannot possibly get if the university is regimented "in accord with a particular culture or a limited set of ideas." With academic freedom, he continues, truth will be thought of as "a process which develops by contact of different ideas and by free discussion" and it is only at a university where this is understood that the other great institutions of society can be criticized.

A symposium on academic freedom is also presented in the same issue of the *Journal of Higher Education*. Harold W. Stokes makes the point that freedom is not academic but that academic freedom exists only where freedom in general is a matter of national concern. "If the dominant interests of a society become power or national security or even welfare," he warns, "the freedom of the schools to teach will be tailored accordingly." In writing on "Truth and Freedom" John K. Ryan emphasizes that the obligation of the teacher is to establish objective truth in his own field of investigation and that he should guard against the temptation to dogmatize upon subjects concerning

which he has no authoritative knowledge. Constance Warren probably summarizes the situation for the colleges when she remarks that relatively few enjoy complete academic freedom today, but are limited in what they may teach "by the viewpoint of their patrons, by the confusion in men's minds between blind loyalty and constructive loyalty to one's country, by suspicion of new ideas and alien cultures, and by economic and religious interests which bear a threat to their power and prestige." Both professional men and laymen need vigorous education if the potential dangers this situation implies are to be overcome.

"THE NOVELIST TODAY" IS DISCUSSED by Storm Jameson in the *Virginia Quarterly Review* for autumn. The novelist needs freedom—freedom from pressure to propagandize or moralize. Pressure to write with social purpose has stopped the writing of some novelists—not in Russia only but such men as E. M. Forster and André Malraux. Reportorial novels are not difficult under modern conditions, as truly creative work would be, but should be recognized for what they are by authors and public. "Life today is too much for the novelist: . . . he can only continue as a novelist by ignoring either the more frightening things he knows about the world or the more profound things he knows about our hearts." Perhaps some new American novelist with a new technique may carry on from where Malraux has stopped.

In the same magazine Marchette Chute writes about "The Bubble, Reputation." She shows Shakespeare as relatively ignored by the critics of his own day, merely praised for "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece." So she distrusts the critic who may try to decide which contemporary writer is great and which one is not.

THE WESTERN REVIEW (FOUNDED in 1937) has just moved from the University of Kansas to the State University of Iowa at Iowa City. Ray B. West, Jr., is the editor; \$2.00 a year (four issues) is the subscription price.

"IS THERE AN AMERICAN STOCK?" asks Max Lerner in *Common Ground* for autumn. Practically all the racial and cultural stocks of the world are here, and all are being modified by the environment. Franz Boas showed in *Changes of Bodily Form in Descendants of Immigrants* (1912) that the skull indexes of children of Jewish and Italian immigrants were different from those of their parents. Lerner mentions the mixing of the different stocks but does not follow up this beyond a prediction that a rather general American type may ultimately appear with individuals deviating slightly toward the types which came here.

IN "A TALE OF TWO CITIES" IN *Life and Letters* Jack Lindsay projects a new facet of Dickensian criticism by revealing in that novel unsuspected symbolism induced by the personal crisis in Dickens' own life at the time he was writing it. It is not a great novel, Lindsay thinks, but when seriously approached "turns out to be a work of high interest, yielding some essential clues to the workings of Dickens's mind and of creative symbolism in general." Dickens was in love with the actress Ellen Lawless Ternan, whom he wished to marry, although he already had a wife. According to Lindsay, he didn't feel simply an intellectual urge to revalue history. He felt the need to write about the French Revolution, in part because a symbol made him feel a basic coincidence between his own experience and the Revolution. That symbol was the imprisoned man in the Bastille. Darnay and Carton are both Dickens. By the device of having two heroes practically twins in appearance who love the same girl Dickens gets the satisfaction of nobly giving up the girl and yet marrying her. Charles Darnay revealingly has the initials "Charles D." Ellen Ternan, who was then acting the part of Lucy in *The Frozen Deep*, is Lucie. But Dickens was also closely entangled with certain currents of symbolism developed in his own day, and Lindsay discusses in some detail the relationship both in method and theme of *A Tale of Two Cities* to Bulwer-

Lytton's novel *Zanoni* and to Watts Philip's play, *The Dead Heart*. Such analysis underlines the extent to which Manette, Darnay, and Carton are all one person: Dickens.

THE *PACIFIC SPECTATOR* HAS inaugurated a new series of essays by some of the most skilful contemporary writers of short stories. Each writer selects a story of his own, one whose origins and development are clear to himself, and "unravels its fabric down to the lint of which it is composed." In the current issue Walter Van Tilburg Clark in this manner discusses his "The Portable Phonograph" and Jessamyn West her "Dr. Chooney."

THE *PARTISAN REVIEW'S* FIRST annual literary award of \$1,000 "not for a single book but to a distinguished body of work" has been given to George Orwell. Author of the current success, *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Orwell until now has been known in this country chiefly for his *Animal Farm*, but he has also written five other volumes, well circulated in England, of which perhaps the most significant are *Burmese Days* (1934) and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

A NEW LITERARY QUARTERLY concerned with the most interesting and lively developments in postwar literature has recently appeared in Britain. Its name is *Arena*, which well describes this adventure in contemporary comparative literature. The current issue includes writings of Montale, Villorini, and Alvaro, from Italy; part of an important long poem by a new Greek poet; and an essay by a Danish critic on Kierkegaard. However, *Arena* will be getting stiff competition from the older British literary magazines, *Cornhill*, *Life and Letters*, and *Horizon*, which in recent issues have been printing excellent translations of short stories by contemporary European writers. The address of *Arena*: % Fore Publications, Ltd., 28/29 Southampton Street, London, WC2. Subscription: 10s. a year.

THE NATIONAL POETRY ASSOCIATION announces January 1, 1950, as the closing date for the submission of manuscripts for its second *Anthology of Teachers' Poetry*. Details from the Association, 3210-G Selby Avenue, Los Angeles 34, California.

THE BOOK SWAP CLUB IS THE latest way to get at low cost the books you want to read. A member (\$2.00 dues) sends a book he wants to trade and 35 cents, and picks a book from the tri-weekly list of three hundred titles sent by the club. The proprietors—all the book "clubs" are proprietary, not co-operative—are Morton and Florence Joselson, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE COLLEGE Entrance Examination Board in his annual report questions the wisdom of the Board's substitution of the "comprehensive" examinations in academic fields for the older tests based upon recommended courses of study—the restricted list of readings in literature, for example. The wider diversity of scholastic preparation compels the colleges to broaden their courses to meet the needs of the diversely prepared entrants—and he says some teachers, both in college and in secondary schools, feel that the broadening involves dilution. He suggests—does not yet urge—a return to examinations on a limited curriculum. After the Eight-Year Study, particularly after *Did They Succeed in College?* all this seems very queer. The change from restricted to comprehensive examinations was achieved through agitation by secondary teachers. Modern notions of meeting students' needs and of adapting instruction to individual differences seems incompatible with the old college-prescribed, hard-and-fast curriculum. Secondary-school teachers had better express themselves again!

The whole report may be secured from the Secretary of the College Entrance Examination Board, 425 West 117 Street, New York 27, for 50 cents. *Terms of Admission to the Member Colleges: Handbook, 1949, with*

Supplement, 1950, from same address at \$1.50. *The Bulletin of Information and Sample Tests, 1949-50* (of the CEEB) from the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, which administers all CEEB tests.

"THE ABOLITION OF SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS for Admission to College," by Paul B. Diederich in the *School Review* for September furnishes plenty of ammunition for attack upon narrow college-entrance examinations or credit requirements. The University of Chicago, says Diederich, does not even suggest what courses schools should give; it depends entirely upon a reading test, a composition test, and the Psychological Examination of the American Council on Education. "No substantial correlation between the pattern of courses taken in secondary school and marks in college has ever been found." It is unrealistic for the college people, most of whom have *never* taught in high schools and who know nothing of the newer conditions in those schools, to prescribe curriculums. Historically, the uniform college-entrance requirements were formulated under the leadership of Charles Eliot, of Harvard, who saw the high schools in confusion because each college had its own special set of entrance requirements; the cure was better than the disease. The high schools are for the people and should not be dominated by aristocratic colleges. It is unscientific to ignore the report of the Eight-Year Study, which showed conclusively that the pursuit of certain prescribed studies is not essential to success in college.

THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE SEPTEMBER issue of *Fortune* reports a poll of parents' opinions on what young people should get out of college. Of the ten objectives from which the parents interviewed were asked to choose the three they most desired college to accomplish, *training for a particular occupation or profession* ranked first for sons and third for daughters. Even for daughters the first choice was really vocational: *preparation for marriage and family life. A better appreciation of such things as literature, music, and art* ranked last for sons and next

to last for daughters. *The intelligence and wisdom necessary to live a full life* ranked fourth for sons, second for daughters. Parents who had attended high school responded only a little more wisely than those who had not. We have much to do!

"THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING Shakespeare," by Robert G. Templeton, fills most of the October-November issue of the *English Leaflet*—twenty-seven pages. After relating an experience with volunteers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology who gathered in the evening to study *Henry IV, Part I* largely by careful examination of the language (without credit), Mr. Templeton recommends several procedures, such as discussions based chiefly on students' questions, paraphrasing, stereopticon projection of passages for intensive consideration, acting, oral summaries (by students) at the end of each act, and specific attack upon the language problems, both figures of speech and words now obsolete or changed in meaning. Adequate summary is impossible here.

"DO METHODS AND OTHER EDUCATION courses need to be revised?" Hardy Finch poses this question in his monthly column for English teachers in the September 28 issue of *Scholastic Teacher*. Mr. Finch made an informal survey and discovered that "some courses are very helpful" and that "most courses are filled with educational terms and high sounding objectives, but offer but little of a practical nature." The teachers with whom Mr. Finch talked asked that the courses be made more practical, that the courses give something that the teachers can use in the classroom. "Teachers like to know the theory and philosophy of education, but they are more intensely interested in the specific ways that they can help Johnny and Susan in speaking, writing, listening, and reading," he writes. Mr. Finch closes his discussion with the suggestion that colleges and universities offer a course in "Practical Methods in the Teaching of English," with not more than five minutes of theory in any one class period.

About Radio

THE NBC "UNIVERSITY THEATER" was the recipient of the Council's annual Radio Award at the November 26 luncheon meeting in Buffalo.

The Committee on Radio in the citation said that the 1948-49 series, broadcast Sunday afternoons over the National Broadcasting Company's network, had a high percentage of success in its "effort to use the radio medium for the presentation of material of interest to mature minds and minds reaching for maturity."

The "University Theater," the citation continued, "has acquainted a large group of people with worth-while books that they otherwise would never have known. It has stimulated students in classes in English to do further reading of the authors whose works were dramatized. The program deserves additional commendation for encouraging as well as allowing for extension of a listening experience through home and classroom study. Occasional deviations from standard and errors in selection did not detract from over-all quality of purpose and presentation. All in all, it has been a valuable contribution in a day when reading has been supplanted by so many other activities. Dramatic offerings on the air have been far ahead of all other types of broadcasts, and this program is at the top of the dramatic group."

Honorable mention went to "You Are There" (CBS), "The Greatest Story ever Told" (ABC), and "Invitation to Learning" (CBS).

In announcing the supplementary honors, Leon C. Hood, chairman of the Committee on Radio, remarked:

"You Are There" has combined showmanship and educational values. It was one of the

few successful departures from standard radio fare and was outstanding for its imaginative conception and choice of material. It served as an excellent stimulant of the imagination and as a point of departure for creative dramatic writing in the classroom. Occasionally, however, the individual programs fell below expected par in quality of script and in production.

"The Greatest Story Ever Told" was beautifully written; the acting was superior; and the theme is one to inspire love, reverence, and respect for the teachings of the "greatest Life ever lived."

"Invitation to Learning" was an outstanding example of programming for mature minds, containing thoughtful and scholarly discussions of the world's great literary masterpieces. It is the type of program that deserves a larger audience than it apparently has. The Columbia Broadcasting System is to be commended for its having kept the program on the air year after year, thereby serving an audience that often finds little that challenges its attention.

Mr. Hood reports that the programs for the last two months of the first semester of the NBC "University Theater" are as follows: *You Can't Go Home Again*, by Thomas Wolfe, December 11; *Manhattan Transfer*, by John Dos Passos, January 8; *The Ides of March*, by Thornton Wilder, January 15; *At Heaven's Gate*, by Robert Penn Warren, January 22; *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, by Katherine Anne Porter, January 29. Two to three o'clock, EST.

"Invitation to Learning" discusses *Creative Evolution*, by Henri Bergson, on December 11; and *You Can't Go Home Again*, by Thomas Wolfe, on December 18. Sundays at noon, EST. (9:30 A.M. in Chicago.)

"You Are There" returned to the air on October 30 on a once-in-four-weeks basis.

New Books

CHAUCEER'S PILGRIMS

Even though you may have enjoyed for many years those exquisite portraits, those vivid pictures of typical medieval figures, which Geoffrey Chaucer painted in the latter part of the fourteenth century in his Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, you will want to dip into, perhaps read every word of, Muriel Bowden's *A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*.¹ She has done a masterful job in collecting the scholarly evidence in connection with each of the pilgrims on his way to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury and of giving us at the same time an excellent picture of the Middle Ages. What is more, all of this scholarship is presented in a delightfully readable style which will appeal to both scholar and general reader.

Dr. Bowden had in mind three types of readers: (1) those schooled in Chaucerian criticism, for whom she has collected and arranged the outstanding latest critical opinions on the Prologue and pointed out the best of known parallels between Chaucer's words and ideas and those of authors living before or at the same time with him; (2) the college student, for whom she has given significant notes so as to aid him in understanding the late fourteenth century and to point the way to further investigation; (3) the general reader, for whom she has made clear what is obscure in the language, in the ideas, customs, and institutions of Chaucer's England so that he can enjoy the Knight's prowess; the Squire's accomplishments in arms, love, music, and poetry; the dainty table manners and tender heart of the Prioress; the Monk's love of hunting and eating; the Friar's "daliaunce and fair langage," with which he charmed

the women; the Merchant's "Flaundryssh bever hat" and forked beard; the Clerk's love of Aristotle and "philosophie"; the Miller's wart on his nose and ability to take toll thrice; the Doctor's and the Lawyer's skill in getting gold; the Summoner's "fyre-red" blotched face; and the Pardoner's thin yellow hair and squeaky voice. In addition the spelling has been modernized in that modern sound symbols have been substituted for the Middle English symbols and the letters *u* and *v* adjusted to modern practice. This book affords an excellent introduction to the great poet writing in the language which developed into Modern English and to the nature of the medieval age, an age in which the belief in the equality of man was emerging.

MARGARET M. BRYANT

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

WRITING AND SELLING FEATURE ARTICLES¹

College English teachers, whether they train students to produce literary "think-pieces" or to create salable nonfiction, will want to know about this practical book. Its theme is that beginners can write and can sell what they write—in this case, fact articles.

Miss Patterson (journalism department, University of Wisconsin) explains exactly how to write the different kinds of articles. She stresses the need to study the markets and to slant one's scripts to particular magazines or newspapers. In this respect, her text is designed to help students (and teachers, too!) who want to write articles rather than fiction.

Sections in this new edition, helpful to

¹ Helen M. Patterson, *Writing and Selling Feature Articles*. 2d ed. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949. Pp. xxx+704. Illustrated \$3.50.

¹ New York: Macmillan Co., 1948. Pp. ix+316. \$4.00.

users who want the advanced vocational slant, are titled: "Training for a Magazine Career" and "Magazine Production Is a Huge Industry." The would-be free-lance writer is shown that feature-writing is good business, and he is also given hints on finding ideas, research, interviewing, and preparation of the manuscript for market.

In line with the increased use of science copy in all mediums, this new volume explains how to write scientific and technical articles. The author's style is readable, fact packed, and fast paced. A teacher's manual is available to explain Miss Patterson's teaching methods.

JOSEPH C. CARTER

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Twentieth Century Poetry in English: Contemporary Recordings of the Poets Reading Their Own Poems Selected and Arranged by the Consultants in Poetry in English at the Library of Congress and Issued under a Grant from the Bollingen Foundation. Album III. By T. S. ELIOT. Library of Congress Recording Laboratory, Washington 25, D.C. \$8.25 plus packing and postage charges.

To the useful series of phonographic records reproducing numerous contemporary poets heard in their own verses, the Library of Congress has recently introduced an album of readings by T. S. Eliot. The poems recited are, "The Waste Land," "Ash-Wednesday," "New Hampshire," "Virginia," and "Sweeney among the Nightingales." The recordings are of excellent quality. They are accompanied by a printed text, including a brief sketch of the poet's life, publications, and principal commentators. Our national library does a great service in such work, which it is hoped may be rapidly expanded.

On hearing these records one naturally appraises Eliot as a reader. There is special interest here, for, quite apart from any general appraisal of Eliot as a poet, there can be no doubt whatsoever that he writes with extraordinary sensitivity for the sound of his words. As might be supposed, he has an exceptionally rich voice, tender and delicately modulated. But just as his lyric or elegiac poetry has in recent years become more meditative and less dramatic, his voice has become less colorful and theatrical. Earlier recordings of "The Waste Land," "The Hollow Men," and selections from the *Prufrock* volume, are distinctly more vivid and eloquent than are the recordings recently made in Washington. Having lost so much of his dramatic flare, he now appears to best advantage in the incantational verse of his mystical-ecclesiastical rhapsody, "Ash-Wednesday," a poem read here with the best of Anglican decorum. The new flatness is chiefly to be regretted in his rendering of "Sweeney among the Nightingales," an ironic poem which appears to have lost something of its freshness in the mind of its author.

In the opinion of the present reviewer, Eliot never wrote more beautiful lines than the seldom-quoted and much muted "Virginia." The inclusion of this masterpiece in miniature is one of the happiest features of the present recordings. In these readings of his longer poems, his accent is sometimes British, sometimes of New England (there are moments when it might almost be Robert Frost reading), but in reciting "Virginia," his voice becomes that of pure English poetry, uncontaminated by narrow confinements of place or time.

HENRY W. WELLS

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Brief Reviews

Fiction

Earth Abides. By GEORGE STEWART. Random. Pp. 373. \$3.00.

By the author of *Storm, Fire*, etc. Can you see a world in which a new lethal disease has destroyed all but a few, a very few, widely scattered people? What these people might do, what their physical and psychological problems might be and how they would solve them, is the theme of Stewart's novel. Would man face this disaster? Would a new society evolve which in turn would develop complications such as we know? Daring conjectures, fascinating reading.

Medical Meeting. By MILDRED WALKER. Harcourt. \$3.00.

Liz and her husband, Dr. Henry Baker, journey to Chicago to a medical meeting at which Dr. Baker is to present a paper on his discovery of a new life-saving drug. After fourteen years they are to meet again old friends and fellow-students. Any reader who has ever attended a convention will understand. The action takes place in the few days of the meeting. Dramatic, sensitive, understanding.

Mary. By SHOLEM ASCH. Putnam. Pp. 436. \$3.50.

By the author of *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle*. Asch has made the homes, the market place, the streets of Jerusalem glow with life. The girlhood of Mary, her betrothal and courtship, are beautifully developed, quietly, passionately, and simply written—compelling in its sincerity.

The Man from Nazareth. By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK. Harper. Pp. 282. \$3.00.

"As his contemporaries saw him." With this idea in mind Dr. Fosdick has endeavored to present Jesus the man and his personality as he would have appeared to us had we known him when he lived in Jerusalem. Dr. Fosdick's many admirers will be stirred by his presentation.

The Conquerors. By THOMAS B. COSTAIN. Doubleday. Pp. 430. \$4.00.

The first of a series which will form "The Pageant of England" closes with the reign of John, in 1216. "The stirring and dramatic story of the Norman Conquest from the Battle of Hastings until Saxon and Norman were completely merged." Mr. Costain believes in accuracy, but he thinks history should be written with the modern novelist's three-dimensional methods.

The Man with the Golden Arm. By NELSON ALGREN. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Based upon crime in a notorious street in Chicago. The characters are gamblers, petty criminals, drug addicts, and men and women succumbing to despair. A grim and sordid picture exceedingly well done.

The River Journey. By ROBERT NATHAN. Knopf. \$2.50.

When told she had only a short time to live, Henry's middle-aged wife bought a houseboat and set out with her husband for a trip down the Mississippi River. They were joined by Death, whose other name was Mr. Mortimer. Humorous, sentimental, philosophical. Not so effective as usual for Nathan.

Give Me Thy Vineyard. By GUY HOWARD. Zonder-van. Pp. 287. \$3.00.

International Fiction Contest winner, by the "Walkin' Preacher of the Ozarks." Hiram Jackson was young but fearless. He refused to accept the check the United Electric Company offered him when they ruined the lovely valley and destroyed the old homes of the farmers. A preacher-teacher is the real hero of the book. A story of suspense—of right and wrong—almost a detective story.

The Passionate Journey. By IRVING STONE. Doubleday. \$3.00.

A fine biographical novel of John Noble, Kansas-born artist, 1874-1934. Similar to the author's *Lust for Life* and quite as readable.

Singular Travels and Adventures of Baron Munchausen. By R. E. RASPE and OTHERS. Edited with Introduction by JOHN CARSWELL. Chanticleer Press. Pp. 178. \$2.75.

In the Introduction is an account of the authorship, the publication of the book, and a sketch of Raspe. Illustrated.

Dominique. By EUGENE FROMENTIN. Translated by SIR EDWARD MARSH. Chanticleer Press. Pp. 249. \$2.75.

First published in 1863, it is rated with *Madame Bovary* and *Adolphe*.

A Harvest of World Folk Tales. Edited by MILTON RUGOFF. Viking. \$3.95.

All kinds of tales are here, complete and coherent. There is an excellent "Note on Folk Tales." The tales are grouped as to origin: African, American, American Indian, Arabian and Turkish, Chinese, Egyptian—nineteen nationalities. The editor calls attention to the fact that folk tales are international, that most stories have their parallel in the folklore of other nations. Appropriately and attractively illustrated. Good reading, good psychology. 734 pages.

The Desperate Children. By DAVID CORNEL DE JONG. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Two lonely boys gather wisdom and happiness from an unorthodox teacher who knows she has cancer but is cheerful and considerate.

Place Called Estherville. By ERSKINE CALDWELL. Duell, Sloan. Pp. 244. \$2.75.

Two young mulattoes, nineteen or so, brother and sister, came from a farm to a small southern town where they hoped to find work. Caldwell's story tells of the tragedies which befell them when the girl became a prey to white males and white women seduced the boy. A sad story well told, though some readers may question his assumptions.

As a Man Grows Older. By ITALO SVEVO. Translated by BERYL DE ZOETE. New Directions. \$3.00.

A masterly psychological novel by an Italian author, written early in the twentieth century.

The Rock Pool. By CYRIL CONNOLLY. New Directions. \$1.50.

By the editor of England's well-known literary magazine *Horizon*. A study of character demoralization.

The Fruits of the Earth. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Knopf. \$3.00.

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